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THE

RIGHTS OF THE POOR.

By the same Author.

A NEW SYSTEM of LOGIC. Upon Christian Principles.

LONDON: ROBSON, LEVEY, AND FRANKLYN,  
46 St. Martin's Lane.

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THE  
RIGHTS OF THE POOR

AND

**Christian Almsgiving vindicated ;**

OR

THE STATE AND CHARACTER OF THE POOR,

AND

THE CONDUCT AND DUTIES OF THE RICH,

EXHIBITED AND ILLUSTRATED.

By S. R. BOSANQUET, Esq.



VIA CÆLI PAUPER EST.

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## NOTICE.

A CONSIDERABLE portion of the matter contained in the following pages has appeared in two recent numbers of the "British Critic." The whole is now collected together, and presented in the form and extent in which it was originally prepared, with improvements and additions.



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Page 344, line 10, *for* "St. Chrysostom" *read* "St. Augustine."

The Rights of the Poor.



THE  
RIGHTS OF THE POOR,  
AND  
*Christian Almsgiving.*

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CHAPTER I.

*Introduction.*

THE PREVALENT OPINION OF THE POOR IS A HARSH  
AND UNCHARITABLE ONE—THE HISTORY AND  
GROWTH OF THIS OPINION.

THE present disposition of writers upon charity is to depreciate the poor, to enumerate their crimes, to magnify their impostures, to prove that they bring their own misfortunes upon themselves by their vices, and that the alms which are given to them do in general more harm than good. The abundance of charity in this country, and the too great liberality of the English character, is another point generally assumed by them. These

topics are the burden of the writings of private theorists and philanthropists, of several parliamentary reports, and especially of the reports and other publications which have emanated from the Poor-Law Commissioners.

This doctrine respecting the poor had its rise so soon as the effects of the policy of Henry and Elizabeth towards the poor and vagrants had begun to be apparent. From the time when the principal resources of the poor were taken away from them, by the dissolution of monasteries and religious houses, the complaint arose and increased of their bad character and rapacity, and of the too great proportion of the wealth of the country which they obtained. Several publications upon this subject appeared in the 17th century; of which I will mention one, a tract by Sir Josiah Child, written shortly after the fire of London.<sup>a</sup> He thus easily excuses the want of liberality in the rich at that time:—

<sup>a</sup> Proposals for the Relief and Employment of the Poor. By Sir Josiah Child. (No date.)

“ As to the second answer to the aforesaid question, wherein *want of charity* is assigned for another cause why the poor are now so much neglected, I think it is a scandalous, ungrounded accusation of our contemporaries; for most that I converse with are not so much troubled to part with their money, as how to place it that it may do good and not hurt to the kingdom; for *if they give to beggars in the streets, or at their doors, they fear they do hurt* by encouraging that lazy, unprofitable kind of life; and *if they give more than their proportions in their respective parishes, that* (they say) *is giving to the rich*, for the poor are not set on work thereby, nor have they more given them; but only their rich neighbours pay the less. And for what was given in *churches* to the *visited poor*, and to such as were *impoverished by the fire*, we have heard of so many and great abuses of that kind of *charity*, that most men are under sad discouragements in relation thereunto.”

During the last century this system and

doctrine gained ground continually. At the beginning of the century, De Foe wrote a small treatise, entitled "Giving Alms no Charity."<sup>b</sup> These are some of the sentences contained in it:—

"Truly the scandal lies on our charity; and people have such a notion in England of being pitiful and charitable, that they encourage vagrants, and by a mistaken zeal do more harm than good."

"An alms ill directed may be charity to the particular persons, but becomes an injury to the public, and no charity to the nation."

"As for the craving poor, I am persuaded I do them no wrong when I say, that if they were incorporated, they would be the richest society in the nation."

"The poverty and exigence of the poor in England is plainly derived from one of these two particular causes — *casualty* or *crime*."<sup>c</sup>

<sup>b</sup> Giving Alms no Charity. By Daniel De Foe. London: 4to. 1704.

<sup>c</sup> "You would think Flavia had the tenderest con-



But still these are not the chief topics of either of these publications. Entire works were not then written, having the depreciation of the poor for their object.<sup>d</sup> But this doctrine and system of economy towards the poor has now become so general and accept-

science in the world, if you was to see how scrupulous and apprehensive she is of the guilt and danger of giving amiss. As for poor people themselves, she will admit of no complaints from them; she is very positive they are all cheats and liars, and will say any thing to get relief, and therefore it must be a sin to encourage them in their evil ways.”—LAW’S *Serious Call*, chap. 7. (Law died in 1761.)

<sup>d</sup> The following are the titles of two other tracts having the same tendency :—

“Some Proposals for the Imployment of the Poor, and for the Prevention of Idleness, and the consequence thereof, *Begging*; a practice so dishonourable to the Nation *and the Christian Religion*. In a letter to a friend, by T. F. (*i. e.* Firman).”

“A present Remedy for the Poor, or the most probable means to provide well for the Poor of the Nation, to free us in time from paying the Poor’s Rates, and deliver us from *the publick Nuisance of Beggars*.” London, 1700.

able, that it may almost be said that no voice is raised against it; and the truth has become proved, as it were, by its universal acceptance, and the absence of any answer, or even a denial of it.

The libellous and abusive descriptions of the lower orders of society which characterise modern publications respecting them, and the great popularity which they obtain, is one of the most alarming symptoms of the decline of the national character. It is more than alarming—it is awful and appalling in the highest degree; and exhibits a feeling and tone of character so wholly anti-christian, as must draw down the heaviest judgments upon the nation, unless happily they may be arrested, and turned again into an opposite channel.

It is not my intention to enter at all into the mere political, or rather party object, which is had in view in any of the works alluded to; though of course no real distinction can exist between public and private duty—between morals, religion, and poli-

tics. My object is as separate as was that of the early Church, when it existed in the midst of the Roman empire. Its endeavour was not to make shifts and modifications, or to cause its rulers to adopt in preference this or that heathenism; but to convince the people, and to make the empire Christian. I feel persuaded that an entire change of opinion and feeling towards the classes beneath us, that a total change of conduct and communication must be wrought, before we can lay any just claim to the character of a really Christian people—Christian, not in name and doctrines only, but in feelings and conduct.

Scarcely a voice, as I said, has been raised in favour of the character of the lower orders of late years, or even of free and liberal almsgiving, except in charity-sermons, and the reports of particular societies. Yet who can tell but that an example on the side of mercy also may find some followers in the same career,—as that on the side of merciless and selfish cruelty has

found many, very many; and the more, if the side of mercy should also haply be found to be the side of truth. But the facts from which these harsh conclusions have been drawn are as false, for the most part, as the reasoning which has been founded upon them.

I will venture to take the initiative in an opposition to this unitarian, antichristian system of philanthropy, which most assiduously and disinterestedly forwards and invents all schemes of benefit and relief which throw the burden of the poverty of the poor upon themselves, and promote economy in giving, and urges all these self-assisting schemes by a systematic searching out, recording, and exaggerating of all the crimes and charges to which the poor have been, or can be subject, without opportunity of defence or denial, and keeping all their virtues in the background.

I will enumerate some of the charges against the lower classes brought forward in the reports above alluded to; simply say-

ing of them all, that they are gross misrepresentations, and very false pictures. Many of them contradict themselves; and most of them are too bad to be credited upon reflection.

The following is the manner in which all the lower orders are classed and confounded together as profligates and villains. The hard-working man is not distinguished from the lazy and the loiterer; the suffering and unfortunate from the sturdy beggar. The impression intended to be conveyed is, that every man living from hand to mouth (the necessary condition of the major part of the community)—that every barrow and basket-woman—that every hawker and pedlar—every hop-picker—every street-sweeper, porter, cabman—all the criers in London, whether of hare-skins, old clothes, old bottles, water-cresses (trades by which thousands and thousands of women and men support themselves honestly)—that every body below a mechanic and a shopkeeper (and those are not spared either),—is little better than a

thief, is one of the offal of society, and ought to be swept off into some common sewer of filth and corruption by a scavenger police. A single example is sufficient for a general conclusion, when the vices of the poor are the subject.

“There are districts in London which are exclusively inhabited and most densely populated by Irish labourers, by persons who support themselves by the chance-adventure of each day, by professed beggars, and confirmed thieves.

“The nucleus of crime in St. Giles’s consists of about six streets, riddled with courts, alleys, passages, and dark entries, all leading to rooms and smaller tenements, crowded with a population existing in all the filth attendant upon improvidence, crime, and profligacy, as if the inhabitants by common consent deem themselves only ‘tenants at will,’ till the gallows or the hulks should require them.”<sup>e</sup>

<sup>e</sup> Poverty, Mendicity, and Crime; or, the Facts, Examinations, &c. upon which the Report was founded,



There are multitudes in the district here mentioned earning a hard but honest livelihood; and there is no part of it which may not be visited by the clergy, or by any other person on a charitable errand, with perfect safety.

“The majority of those who live by labour in St. Giles’s are Irish persons, such as porters, bricklayers’ labourers, hawkers, &c. &c. The women also attend the markets, or sell fruit or fish in the streets, or go out charing or washing. These people live hard in their fare, and still harder in their drink, for they generally get as drunk as their means will allow them.

“There is also a great number of hawkers, boardmen, cabmen, and higglers; men of precarious callings, and whose characteristics are of more doubtful complexion than those of the labouring men, who rise and go to a fixed employment.<sup>f</sup>

presented to the House of Lords, by W. A. Miles, Esq.  
London, 1839, p. 87.

<sup>f</sup> Poverty, Mendicity, and Crime, pp. 88, 89. Evi-

“ Most thieves have hawkers’ licences.<sup>g</sup>

“ Mr. Burgess, the governor of Knutsford, states, ‘ I conceive the vagrant system to be quite as bad as common thieving.’<sup>h</sup>

dence has lately been received and published, as if credible, by the House of Commons Committee on the Health of Towns (16th July, 1840, p. 61), that certain districts in Glasgow, of from 20,000 to 30,000 inhabitants, contain “ a motley population, consisting in almost all the lower branches of occupation, but chiefly of a community whose sole means of subsistence consists in plunder and prostitution :” *i. e.* 1 in 12½ to 1 in 8½ of the whole population of Glasgow have this sweeping imputation cast upon them. The foundation of this evidence was four visits to these districts, in company with a police superintendent. Misery might be partially, though very imperfectly, seen in the course of four visits, in the day-time, perhaps ; but crime hides itself from broad daylight and police superintendents, and could not be witnessed to any such extent in any four visits. An experienced visiter of the poor, who habitually enters their abodes of wretchedness, can alone give a description of their condition and miseries. It would be well to know how many apartments the witness entered throughout these extensive districts in the course of his four visits.

<sup>g</sup> Constab. Force Rep. 1839, p. 36.    <sup>h</sup> *Ib.* p. 56.



“ The hare-skin time is now on. Those people take out a daily supply of bad money, and pass it away when they give change.<sup>i</sup>

“ A fellow, pale-faced, with sandy whiskers, named Charles Smith, sells rag stable-mops, which he gets rid of at the stables or mews; he steals brushes, buckets, or any thing; he has a bag with him; he gets the best price in Petticoat Lane.

“ A flower-man happened to pass at the time; Prime caught sight of him through the window, and cried out, ‘ Look there; now, can that man make enough by those flowers to live honestly—is it likely?—They get into houses when bargaining, see how they are constructed, and the doors fastened, which information he gives to burglars.’<sup>k</sup>

“ Mr. Limbird, of the Strand, heard two old clothesmen ask a countryman, who had a parcel in his hand, if he had any thing for sale, remarking, whether it was his own or

<sup>i</sup> Constabulary Force Report, p. 97.

<sup>k</sup> Ibid. p. 147.

not, it made no difference to them, if he wanted the money.

“ Dog-cart men are almost all of them thieves.

“ Rag-gatherers generally go in pairs, and are called the school of paper-makers. They call at old-rag shops, and represent themselves as agents or labourers for some mill which has been destroyed; and that in this or some other invented emergency, they are sent forward to collect rags; and while one is bargaining with the shopwoman, the other walks off with the bundle, stating that the master is close behind, and leaving his companion in pledge, who nearly always contrives to ‘bolt,’ without ‘paying a stiver;’ or he satisfies the woman by chalking characters on the door-posts, which he says is to tell the master the sum he has to pay for the rags, and he is allowed to depart. The booty is taken to a marine-store dealer, or it is swopped away at a paper-maker’s for paper, which they dispose of to shops in little villages.

“ Old-rag shops will buy all sorts of metal.”<sup>1</sup>

There is a playfulness and flippancy in this last description (which is evidently a general conclusion drawn from a particular instance), which is peculiarly contemptible and disgusting. The whole reminds us of the foolish, thoughtless children—deserving whipping in spite of their foolish thoughtlessness—sporting with the lives of frogs. But independent of the absurdity and self-contradiction of most of these descriptions—for the thief here seems to be no match for the thief, but to be as soft as any other person,—what do the whole of these evidences and this reasoning amount to, which are intended to exhibit a faithful and general picture? Why to this, that all hare-skin women try to stigmatise and destroy their own trade; that one seller of stable-mops is a notorious thief, and carries off buckets in a bag in broad daylight; that a flower-man is proved a thief by the opinion of another

<sup>1</sup> Constabulary Force Report, pp. 154, 155.

thief, and a *reductio ad necessitatem*; that two old clothesmen talked so loud, that amidst all the rattling of the Strand, Mr. Limbird thought he heard them both say what would readily have transported them.

But the whole in effect is mere caricature. It is a pity that such caricature descriptions should be used to form our opinions of the poor, and be made in these times the groundwork of legislation.

But these people are not satisfied with depreciating the poor. To vilify, and prove them all to be punishable, would be fulfilling only half their object. To steel the hearts of the rich effectually, and to stop the springs of charity, it is necessary to shew that these abandoned classes are rich; that these seeming paupers are all wallowing in luxury. And this is the way they prove it:—

“ Many of the persons who hawk things about the streets in trays make ten shillings a day selling snuff-boxes, steel-pens, &c., the profits of which are more than half.

“ Mrs. Milberry says, she knows that the men who sell pocket-books, &c. at coach-offices, consider nine shillings to be a very trifling day’s profit.”<sup>m</sup>

There is no mention of the thousands who starve at this employment, or make less than a bare subsistence ; or that these profits are made during a few favourable days, and that for successive days they fall to little or nothing.

“ He thinks no beggar makes less than from three shillings to four shillings a day ; they all live very well ; they live as well as any respectable small shopkeeper, he thinks better too.”<sup>n</sup>

“ Street-sweepers in squares and fashionable neighbourhoods make a good trade ; they run of errands for servants, help to clean knives, &c. &c.”<sup>o</sup>

“ Beggars live well ; have hot beefsteaks and beer for breakfast ; fare well at night, and are never poor.”<sup>p</sup>

<sup>m</sup> Poverty, Mendicity, and Crime, p. 96.

<sup>n</sup> Ibid. p. 97.    <sup>o</sup> Ibid. p. 98.    <sup>p</sup> Ibid. p. 103.

“Cadgers never eat broken food ; they take it and sell it. They live on the best of every thing, and drink hard ; after food, all the surplus goes in drinking.”<sup>1</sup>

I know all these to be false, as a general description. All these classes suffer intensely, and with continual privation ; though there are exceptions as to times, and to particular individuals, in which there are occasions of good success and merriment.

But after the vilifying of the poor in general, and the proofs that they are all at ease and rioting in affluence, there comes the grand and concluding charge, that all almsgiving is injurious, a fraud against the law, an evasion of its wise and wholesome provisions, and a crime against society. This reminds us of that which happened in infidel France, and gives us warning what is the real spirit which dictates all these charges

<sup>1</sup> Poverty, Mendicity, and Crime, p. 147. Cadgers are persons who beg broken victuals. They may very frequently be seen eating it. The quotation from De Foe above, p. 4, will be recollected.



against the poor, and directs the shafts of oppression towards them. When France set up the goddess Reason, declared religion a fraud, and represented their new deity by the most degraded and sensual form of humanity,—the same Convention, in the same year, on the 27th Vendémiaire, an. 2 (15th October, 1793), decreed, “That every person convicted of having given to a beggar any species of relief whatever, should forfeit the value of two days’ wages; to be doubled on a repetition of the offence.”<sup>r</sup> This decree was reversed some time after their return from reason to religion again, and was never found practicable.

We have not yet quite arrived at this ul-

<sup>r</sup> It is curious to observe how purely *heathen* is this policy. Plato would have had a law to banish the poor from states, *ὅπως ἡ χώρα τοῦ τοιούτου ζῴου καθαρὰ γίγνηται τὸ παράπαν*,—that the whole country might be thoroughly cleansed of such creatures. *De Leg.* lib. xi. (See The Dignity and Claims of the Christian Poor; two Sermons, by Frederick Oakeley, A.M., p. 11.)

timate stage and triumph of reason and civilisation by positive enactment, though we are rapidly advancing towards it, and all the causes and processes are actively operating. Already it is a crime to beg, severely punishable ; and every one, therefore, who gives is *particeps criminis*, and is also criminal ; and as such he is complained of, but more contemned, by the Martineau writers of philosophy and political economy. Now, however, we are coming a step closer. The opinion is come nearer to the fountain of legislation, and is paraded with greater show of authority. Thus say the Poor-Law Commissioners, of voluntary contributions to assist labouring persons with large families in times of distress, whose only alternative under the rules of the Commissioners is giving up work altogether, and going into the workhouse with their whole families :

“ The attempts which are constantly made to evade the law by indirect means, whenever there is a possibility of so doing, (as by vo-



luntary rates, &c. &c.), confirm us in this anticipation, viz. that all old abuses would creep in again, if the Poor-Law Commission were abolished.”<sup>s</sup>

“The only remains of it”—(relief to men in work, and in aid of wages)—“are to be found in certain irregular practices, to which, if they were not occasionally suggested by erroneous notions of humanity, we should give the appellation of *fraudulent*. We allude to attempts, through private subscriptions, by which funds have been raised to be doled out, like the poor-rates, in weekly allowances, to all labourers having more than three or four children.”<sup>t</sup>

“— the present demoralising system of begging—a thing so ruinous in its effects, that the major part of the delinquents with which our prisons are filled owe their progress in crime to the encouragement given

<sup>s</sup> Report of the Poor-Law Commissioners on the continuance of the Poor-Law Commission. 1840, p. 7.

<sup>t</sup> Ibid. p. 38.

to idle habits by the false feeling of charity acted on by the public, in the promiscuous dispensation of alms to those who are seldom if ever deserving of them.”<sup>u</sup>

“It is much to be regretted, that the thoughtless and indifferent manner in which the richer classes too often throw away their alms to any applicant, should have afforded encouragement to so many persons to lead a vagrant, and consequently an idle and vicious life ; for it is not to be supposed, when the temptation of obtaining money without labour is offered to a large class, that many persons will not give way to it. In particular, the enormity of sending out young children to beg, and of punishing them if they do not bring home a certain sum (which has been mentioned as frequently practised by the lowest Irish), *is distinctly chargeable to those who encourage the mendicity of children by indiscriminate almsgiving.*”<sup>v</sup>

<sup>u</sup> Poverty, Mendicity, and Crime, p. 126.

<sup>v</sup> Report on the State of the Irish Poor in Great

Even the distribution of soup in winter is made to be a false and injurious beneficence.

These are the kind of charges which are reiterated against the lower orders, and eagerly received by the classes living at their ease, who think them all very interesting, and surprising, and shocking, and feel themselves all the more easy in their consciences from finding how unworthy these depraved classes are of their intercourse and charity. All the old stories are repeated over again—from Colquhoun to the Parliamentary Inquiry in 1818, and from the Parliamentary Inquiry to the Poor-Law Commission; and new facts, and assertions, and estimates, are added, upon the ground of single anecdotes, and hearsay cases, and cruel heartless conjecture. But very few of these estimates are better founded upon truth than Colquhoun's conclusion that

Britain. 1835, p. 25. How far the rich are entitled to the charge of giving their alms too liberally, we shall have occasion to inquire in a subsequent chapter.

there were 50,000 prostitutes in London — increased in the recent prospectus of a public charity to 80,000; whereas they are proved in the late Constabulary Force Report (not very humane inquirers) to be less than 5,500.

Unfortunately these estimates and unfavourable opinions have been widely extended and eagerly entertained for a very long period. The topic has become popular, and the opinions have become rooted, and acknowledged as indisputable, for want of a denial and answer. The charitably disposed, and even the clergy, have become possessed with it. The spirit which has dictated these inquiries and estimates has not till now made itself decidedly apparent; and it has not been duly considered that the parties themselves, who are the subjects of the charge, have not had, and cannot have, the opportunity of an answer.

I propose to give a more favourable, and, I trust, a truer picture of the lower order of

society ; and to urge — upon the foundation of my own experience among the poor, and the incontrovertible ground of Christian obligation — some of those claims and rights of the poorer classes, which have been too entirely forgotten by their richer brethren.

## CHAPTER II.

### *The Existence of Poverty.*

DIFFICULT TO GIVE A FAITHFUL PICTURE. THE EXISTENCE OF POVERTY QUESTIONED. IMPORTANCE OF A CORRECT OPINION. POVERTY CAUSED BY RICHES. EXAMPLES OF GREAT DISTRESS. EFFECTS OF DEFICIENCY OF FOOD. STARVATION GRADUAL. DISEASES CAUSED BY IT. EFFECTS SIMILAR TO THOSE OF INTOXICATION. DISTRESS AMONG ALL CLASSES.

I CANNOT pretend to give a perfect picture of society, even of the lowest class of it. The thing is impossible ; and if it were performed, it would be without effect. Society is not a thing with four sides to it ; no, nor with four hundred. Four thousand examples of different states and conditions of life would be insufficient to depict the different shades and gradations of circumstances, the different complexities and combinations of events ; and, with all their tediousness and wearisomeness,

enough almost to defy attention and memory, would, if the picture were perfect, convey very different impressions to the minds of different individuals. The minds and hearts of different persons would retain and rest upon different points and features, according to preconceived opinions, and impressions, and dispositions. But though all the examples were observed and retained, the impression would be imperfect and inadequate. Life is not to be learned by books, any more than dancing. Classifications, and tables, and figures, and statistics, will not more faithfully portray the expression and character of human life, than mechanism will its movements. Let a painter paint a likeness from description ; let the physician who has read volumes upon the pulse and symptoms, compare with the one who has walked the wards, and attuned his touch to the varied beat of life, in health and disease, in youth and old age, in joy and grief, at morning, noon, and night, in strength, in languor, and in fever. Yet the pulse and features of social



life are finer and more delicate, and fuller of variety, and expression, and character.

Human life is to be learned by practice only and personal experience. But no one now is willing to acquaint himself in this way; and least of all—in this country at least—with the classes below that one in which he moves. It is far easier to sit at home, and read returns, and reports, and evidence on oath, and figures, and statistics, and to work out problems of society by a table or a machine, mathematically certain and demonstrable, and squaring all to a fraction, than to pry into dirty courts and lanes, and dismal rooms and cellars, full of vermin, and filth, and infection, and to converse with the low-minded, the vulgar, the dying, the drunken, the discontented, the miserable. This may be the way to very creditable philosophy, but it is not the road to truth.

My object, however, is a narrow and a definite one,—the existence and nature of poverty, its causes, and the treatment of it.

I know that it is very difficult even to put



this in a true light; and the truest picture will affect the beholders very differently. A too-continued and exclusive view of one particular aspect of society must produce an exaggerated impression; as a too hasty one may be so faint as to have no influence on conduct. A person conversant only in criminal courts of justice might come to a conclusion that almost every poor man was a rogue; one conversant in hospitals, that disease was the ordinary condition of humanity. One conversant in a lawyer's office might think that almost every transaction of business was a matter of legal arrangement; whereas not one in a million is so. One conversant in the preparation of trials might conclude that every matter that was settled in a lawyer's office became the subject of an action; whereas not one in ten thousand does. One who was conversant only with the civil courts of justice might suppose that every action commenced came to trial; whereas not one in a hundred does. One conversant in the offices for relief, and the haunts

and habits of the lowest classes, might suppose that all society, with the exception of a few rich folks, was a mass of ruin, wretchedness, degradation, despair, feebleness of body, gloom of mind, distress of countenance, without a cheering ray of enjoyment or hope, or of forgetfulness, except in drunkenness.

If too vivid an impression may be created by constant observation, too weak a one also may be the consequence of inattention. Too absorbing an attention to one subject is the exclusion of other subjects from their proper place in the field of truth. This is the present state of the world with regard to pauperism. We are absorbed with political measures, and neglect our own business, and the duties of private life. We are absorbed with the comforts and luxuries of life, the state and station we maintain, and the bettering of our condition. We study also the titles and condition of those above us, their manners, and habits, and opinions, their fortunes, and the calamities which happen to them. But of the condition of the poor we

take little notice ; their habits, their characters, their virtues, their distresses, these we study little to inform ourselves of, with these we little acquaint ourselves, either generally or personally. Of their crimes and vices, their dexterity at imposition, and the shifts to which they resort to obtain some share of the comforts they see around them ; of the mischiefs of injudicious charity, — of these we have accounts, of these we have evidence, and returns, and tables, which we swallow greedily, because they comfortably warrant us in the undisturbed enjoyment of the competency which Providence has graciously bestowed upon us !

My task is to exhibit the opposite side of the picture. Without being at all unaware of their faults and infirmities, or desiring to conceal them, my undertaking is to put forth the claims and virtues of the poor. Enough has been written and read of their deformities : I will put forth something respecting their necessities and merits. I will dwell upon these ; the rest I will acknowledge.

And let it be remembered, that the lowest classes of society are at its base. The base of the pyramid is the widest, and it bears the rest. There is but one king, and some hundreds of lords, and several thousand patricians. But the lowest class are millions; and these are the subject of the remarks which I have to make. Even small circumstances must be of consequence when so much multiplied.

It is a point which requires to be proved, the very existence of poverty. Paupers are generally considered as a kind of nuisance, from which the genteel public ought to be protected. The sight of a beggar is felt to be in some measure indelicate to our very refined tastes; and his importunity is a downright annoyance, which ought not to be tolerated in a country so highly advanced in civilisation. Accordingly we have laws passed which make beggary criminal, not imposture; every beggar is bound to be treated as an impostor, because the law has said that no person shall starve in this cha-

ritable country. But “the poor shall never cease out of the land:” God has said it; and human power, and wisdom, and fastidiousness, have not been able to reverse the decree, made for our good. The charity of the poor-law system, if fairly considered, will be found to be in its spirit a charity towards ourselves. The spirit of the law which makes beggary criminal is precisely the same as that which forbids barrows and basket-women standing on the foot-pavement. The object of both is the convenience of the rich, and is wholly without regard to the condition or necessities of the poorer classes. The first establishment of poor-laws in this country was concurrent with the enactment of most severe laws against beggars and vagrants. But the good which we hope to do ourselves by forbidding beggary, would, if successful, be found to be our great evil.

It is of the greatest importance that we should have a right knowledge respecting the state of the poor, and the existence of poverty. No one perhaps will deny that

poverty exists. But a belief which does not produce practice, and exercise itself in action, is no belief ; it is a practical denial of it. It is necessary also that this belief should be a right belief, and should be founded upon a real and proper view, not only of the existence and extent, but also of the causes and nature of poverty ; otherwise our practice and conduct will be correspondent to our erroneous impressions. A large proportion of those who allow the existence of poverty are ready to say confidently, it is all their own fault ; that no one in this rich and prosperous country *can* be in distress, unless they are either fools or idle. Or others will say, it is want of education which causes it ; or it must be their own worthless character, and that they ought not to be encouraged, for that they deserve it. And such persons' conduct towards the poor will be according to their language, as much as that of those who take every beggar to be a cheat and impostor.

If any of these impressions and opinions



be wrong, though it be only in degree, it is of the highest moment that they should be corrected, and made just in their proportion. All these causes do operate to some extent, each of them ; but a very small error in the degree and the comparison may operate in practice so as to produce a great and gross injustice in the conduct resulting from it. And particularly must the consequences of such an error be important and cruel, when it leans towards the side of ill-opinion and harshness towards the poor. We have motives enough to influence us towards the withholding of charity. Want of means, selfishness, avarice, idleness, the control of fashion—above all, the dislike to be imposed upon, are strong and influential motives, all drawing us towards the side of neglect or refusal. But even when we believe the object to be distressed and deserving, or at least are half convinced, how often do we pass on, and pass by on the other side, and then regret and condemn ourself that we did not stop and give something, or at least inquire

further, or obtain the means of inquiry ! How great would be the effect, at such a moment, of a little better opinion of the poor,—a little less belief and apprehension of imposture ! And yet a person might perhaps have been saved from starving by a little less cautiousness, by a little more freedom and forwardness in charity ! When we are walking fast, because the day is cold ; or we are in a hurry on business ; or when we would or might have given, but that our pocket was buttoned ; or the money was not loose, but it was in our purse, and we did not like to pull it out in the street ; or our glove was on, and it was a tight one ; or when from any other such reason we do not like to stop, but are nevertheless hesitating,—how completely might a different opinion with regard to the poor, and a little less fear of imposture, have turned the scale, and impelled us to a decided conduct ! This is the way in which opinion operates ; this is practical belief. It must be evident, therefore, how great a consequence ought to be attached to the having a real and



accurate and well-balanced knowledge of the actual state of the poorer classes, their necessities, habits, and contrivances.

We many of us wonder how any real and unmerited poverty can any where exist in this rich country. Poverty exists in its present great extent because we are rich. Wherever the greatest riches prevail, there the greatest distress also prevails; and this pretty much in proportion to the accumulation of riches. The distress in London exceeds that of the most backward and poorest parts of the country, nearly in proportion to its wealth and luxury. It is the same with Manchester, and other great and wealthy cities; and more or less with towns in general, in proportion to their wealth, and size, and population. In a word, "England" — the commercial, wealthy, civilised, flourishing England—"is the most pauperised country in Europe."<sup>a</sup> The effect of famines is a matter not here to be considered; but with the exception of

<sup>a</sup> Dr. Kay's Report to the Poor-Law Commissioners, 4th Poor-Law Report, p. 230.

these occasions, the poverty in Ireland is less pressing than the poverty in London, though many of the consequences of wealth and luxury operate in causing the distress of the Irish.

The Irish labourers, it is true, and others of all crafts and professions, flock to London to make their fortune, for here the greatest fortunes are to be made ; and wherever the greatest prices are to be obtained, there will be the most competitors. But where the prizes in a mine or in a lottery are greater, the more numerous must be the blanks ; and the more likely, upon the whole, is the concern to be a losing one. This is the case pre-eminently where wealth is greatly accumulated, and where great numbers, as in towns, are congregated together, and all engaged in the scramble for it. In a country thinly populated, every individual in it is known. Their real circumstances are known to their neighbours, without mistrust or concealment ; and notice is obtained in case there is any thing extreme or unusual in the degree

of poverty. The very lowness of the general condition prevents the neighbourhood from being over-resorted to, and secures their low condition from being still further lowered. But in large and populous towns notoriety becomes proportionably more difficult, and the greatest distress may fail to draw attention. It is proverbial how a country neighbourhood is busy and gossiping; while a crowded town furnishes the means of the most perfect solitude, and a man is very frequently unacquainted even with his next-door neighbour. There are many other causes which operate in rich and crowded cities,—as, the increased selfishness and avariciousness of riches; the absence of all personal connexion, and claim thence arising, between one person and another; the ignorance and inexperience of human life and miseries, and consequent want of sympathy. But of these more hereafter. At present, the existence of distress is our theme; and of this a sufficiency and an increase is observable both in town and country.

Many persons die of starvation in London. It would be difficult to find such cases in any other country.

In the winter of 1827, a female, under eighteen years of age, was seen lying on the steps of St. Andrew's churchyard, Holborn, after midnight, actually perishing through disease and famine. She was a total stranger in London, without a friend; and died two days afterwards, unrecognised by any human being.<sup>b</sup>

Two years ago, a poor man applied to the overseers of P—— for relief, and was turned away as being a well-known beggar. The next day he was found dying in the street, and was conveyed to St. M——'s workhouse, where he died. The surgeon said that he died of starvation.

More recently than the last case, a woman was refused at night at the St. G——'s workhouse, and was carried to St. P——'s, where she died before morning. This case will be mentioned more particularly afterwards.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>b</sup> Report of Royal Free Hosp. 1839, p. 13.    <sup>c</sup> p. 67.

Thomas Jones came to the surgeon of St. G——'s workhouse, who sent him away, saying, that he wanted a baker more than a doctor. The next day he obtained two loaves from the overseers, and died the following day, from over-eating after so long fasting. All the doctors said, that destitution was the cause of his death; and when the surgeon was asked how he came to treat his application so lightly, he said, "Oh, if you saw as many cases of this sort as I do, you would not think so much of it."<sup>d</sup>

Now these are by no means rare occurrences; and the facts are faithful. The three last cases I have investigated myself; for the first I give my authority; and the surgeon's answer, in the last, shews that such occasions cause no surprise to those who are most conversant with the condition of the poor, as to their bodily state and healthfulness.

These are cases in which charity might

<sup>d</sup> Dec. 1839.

have seemed to have been well bestowed, even to the profound political philosopher. To many such it would have been painful to reflect that they had refused a penny, or a penny's worth, even in the streets, to the above-mentioned paupers, just before they died of starvation. And such a painful feeling would not have disgraced their wisdom so much as their philosophy.

So much has been said of late about the evils of charity, and we are so accustomed to it, that we can hear persons freely talk of almsgiving as a crime and an injury to society, and regard them as Christians. So imperative is fashion, and so conventional a matter is philosophy, and conscience, and the use of the understanding ! It matters not that some destitute persons die in the streets ; that multitudes more die by the slow effects of habitual starvation ; it matters not, the threefold exertion and toil and risk which must be undergone barely to obtain a subsistence, and to maintain themselves and an ordinary-sized family in the station to which



they were born and bred, and the numbers who hourly sink under it in strength, and become bankrupt in their health and fortunes, — no, it is the theory of the day, and one of a great name has said it, and a few examples have proved it, and it suits our convenience greatly; and our refined habits and taste, in this highly civilised country, ought not to be plagued and disgusted by the sight of beggars and their importunity. So beggary is an offence and a crime; the very being poor is culpable; vice, folly, idleness, want of spirit, education, character, are said to account for all beggary and pauperism; and the false liberality of the over-charitable is said to be a greater cause and fault than all the rest.

The operation of each of these causes may be acknowledged; and their consequences, and the duties arising out of them, will be noticed afterwards. But there are other causes also in operation, producing intense misery. The chief of these will be enumerated and described in the next chapter. But I will premise two or three examples of

extreme poverty, and refer to others, just to shew its existence and intensity. And none of these ought to be regarded as solitary and very extraordinary instances.

M. A. W. had no home, and was forced to abide sick in the streets three nights. She went to an asylum; and was told not to come again, as she was too ill to be admitted.<sup>e</sup>

I saw an aged porter carrying a burden beyond his strength; and his wife walking by his side, supporting him, lest he should totter under the weight.

James Leatt, aged sixty-two, applied to Sir Richard Birnie, the police-magistrate. He had once been a master butcher, but for fifteen years had served only as a journeyman. Latterly, being both ruptured and rheumatic, he had been supported chiefly by his wife and son. The son, and a daughter aged fourteen, were out of work; and his wife had died two days before, for want of the necessaries of life. He did not know

<sup>e</sup> Sermon, by the Rev. T. Dale, in behalf of the Greville-Street Free Hospital, 1839, p. 8.



how to bury his wife ; and they had not a sixpence.<sup>f</sup>

Martha Robinson was found begging in the streets, with a written petition. Upon inquiry, it proved that she had a large family ; her husband was out of employ ; and one of her children was lying dead, and they had not the means of burying it. The man had once possessed 7000*l*. He was brought up as a farmer, and afterwards kept a public-house. A distress had been put in, and all his furniture sold. A tradesman in the neighbourhood took compassion upon the family, and allowed them to live in one of his unoccupied houses, where they were found when visited. But they were entirely without any means of subsistence.<sup>g</sup>

Mary Buncomb applied for relief with a wildness and incoherency of manner which created a belief that she was deranged. The scene, however, which presented itself when the case was visited, fully accounted for the

<sup>f</sup> Report of the Mendicity Society, 1826, p. 46.

<sup>g</sup> Ibid. 1824, p. 27.

woman's distraction of mind. In one corner of the room lay the body of her husband, who had died nine days before of a fever ; and by his side lay a boy, who had fallen a victim to the same disorder a few days after his father. A cradle contained an infant, six months old, crying aloud ; and near the fire-place stood a half-starved boy, eight years of age. Incredible as it may appear, the landlord had distrained upon their few miserable articles ; and this chamber of death was found in the possession of a broker.<sup>h</sup>

Mary Bacon was found in the streets at night, in a deplorable condition. Having been brought to bed in a country town, at the end of sixteen days they placed her in a wagon, with directions to follow her husband, who had been ordered out of the town by the mayor. The fare was paid to London ; and the wagoner, having no further directions, put her down in the streets immediately on their arrival. In this condition she was found, many miles from her husband's parish,

<sup>h</sup> Mendicity Society, Report 1827, p. 32.

with two children, including the infant, in the middle of the night, in December.<sup>i</sup>

Jane Randall, her husband, and three children, were all found sleeping in one room, upon the boards, not having a bed, or any covering. The wife was a decent, respectable woman; and they all bore an excellent character. The husband was often afflicted with insanity. The eldest girl's appearance was so wretched, that she could not go out for any work. The woman had lately had a paralytic stroke, which prevented her working. The landlord had taken the whole of their things for rent.<sup>j</sup>

Susan Lee applied to the late Bishop of Durham (Barrington), and was visited by one of the officers of the Mendicity Society. Her husband, a lunatic, was confined to the floor, lying on straw, and nearly naked. There were six children, the eldest a girl aged fifteen. They belonged to the parish of Mile-end Old Town, by whom they were

<sup>i</sup> Mendicity Society, Report 1819, p. 44.

<sup>j</sup> Ibid. 1820, p. 46.

allowed five shillings a week. The overseers had offered to take the husband into the workhouse; but as she did not expect him to live long, and as she had for some time supported him in this deplorable state, she did not wish to give him up to the care of the parish. By the usual liberality of the bishop, and other donations, she was enabled to support him till his death.<sup>k</sup>

Caroline Pearson, a girl aged eighteen, was found in a churchyard by a clergyman, in a most wretched condition. Unable to walk without assistance, she was brought to the office by a humane individual, in a most dreadful state. Emaciated and feeble from disease, almost naked, loathsome with vermin, nearly famished for want of food, exhausted and speechless for want of rest, and deserted by her relations, she seemed the very scorn of society; and a few days previous to her application she had been seen tormented by, and the sport of, men and boys. It appeared that she had lived as ser-

Mendicity Society, Report 1826, p. 44.

vant in a public-house, but in consequence of some indiscretion was discharged. Her sister immediately withdrew her protection; and thus she had become reduced to this miserable condition. Her life was saved by prompt and judicious relief, and assiduous attention.<sup>1</sup>

Mary Ann Bowman, a girl eighteen years of age, was found late at night by an inspector of police standing under an archway. All her clothes were in pawn, and she was without means of procuring either food or lodging. She proved to be an orphan. Her father had been a respectable tradesman in Tottenham-Court Road. Since his death she had lived in different situations; but an obstinacy of disposition, and great dislike to service, prevented her keeping them. There was no other imputation upon her character.<sup>m</sup>

John Bishop and his wife were found begging in Oxford Street. From their ap-

<sup>1</sup> Mendicity Society, Report 1820, p. 48.

<sup>m</sup> Ibid. 1835, p. 25.

pearance, it was evident that they were almost in a state of starvation; and the man shewed symptoms of rapid consumption. He had been a cloth-dresser in Wiltshire. He was admitted into an hospital, where he soon after sunk under the complaint, leaving his wife without any means of support.<sup>n</sup>

The cases of immediate death from starvation are comparatively rare. The mode in which deficiency of food occasions death among the poor, is by gradually wasting and destroying their constitutions, and predisposing them to diseases and complaints, by which apparently and immediately they are carried off. The multitudes of such cases are great beyond belief; and the instances in which persons among the poorer classes have their strength undermined, and are incapacitated both in body and mind by the habitual deficiency and inferiority of food, though their death, perhaps, is not occasioned by it, are still more numerous; and

<sup>n</sup> Mendicity Society, Report 1837, p. 33.



of not less injurious consequence to the well-being of the state.

An essay upon the Morbid Effects of Deficiency of Food, especially amongst the poor, has been published by Dr. Howard. His experience was derived chiefly during his attendance at the Royal Infirmary and the Poor-house, at Manchester.

He states, that “ the public generally have a very inadequate idea of the number of persons who perish annually from deficiency of food ; and there are few who would not be painfully surprised if an accurate record of such cases were presented to them. It is true that, in this country, instances of death from *total* abstinence occur only casually ; yet every medical man, whose duties have led him much amongst the poor, who is familiar with the extreme destitution which often prevails amongst them, and the diseases thereby occasioned, is too often a witness to fatal results from gradual and protracted starvation. Although death directly produced by hunger may be rare, there can be no doubt

that a very large proportion of the mortality amongst the labouring classes is attributable to deficiency of food as a main cause, aided by too long continued toil and exertion, without adequate repose, insufficient clothing, exposure to cold, and other privations to which the poor are subjected.”<sup>o</sup> The loss of children and infants from this cause is particularly great.<sup>p</sup>

“The principal mode in which deficiency of food operates, is in weakening the system, and undermining the constitution, and predisposing it to the effects of contagion and the development of specific disease. . . . The destruction of life amongst the poor in this indirect manner is most extensive; but from death being readily referred to some particular disease, to which a name can at once be given, it attracts little notice. In many of these cases there is nothing peculiar in

<sup>o</sup> An Inquiry into the Morbid Effects of Deficiency of Food, chiefly with reference to their occurrence amongst the Destitute Poor, by R. B. Howard, M.D., 1839, p. 2.

<sup>p</sup> Ibid. pp. 16 and 34.



the symptoms to indicate the real cause of their origin. . . . Yet in estimating the mortality amongst the destitute poor from scarcity of food, we must not forget that the result is still the same, whether the privation is so complete as to destroy life in ten days, or so slight and gradual that the fatal event does not occur till after many months' suffering."<sup>a</sup>

The suffering portion of the labouring poor are in a continual state of depression and weakness. The feebleness, and dejection, and distress of countenance which generally prevails with, and pointedly characterises them, must be familiar to every one who has been accustomed to visit them in their abodes of wretchedness. And Dr. Howard remarks,

“Those who are not familiar with the usually delicate state of health, and enfeebled constitutions of these people, would be surprised at the serious evils which result from

<sup>a</sup> Inquiry into the Morbid Effects of Deficiency of Food, pp. 38, 39.

what might be considered no intolerable deterioration in the quality, or diminution in the quantity of their diet.”<sup>r</sup>

“ In persons labouring under an impaired state of health from deficiency of food, there is a remarkable susceptibility to the effects of contagion, unwholesome conditions of the atmosphere, vicissitudes of the weather, and, in short, to all the existing causes of disease ; and it is this class which always suffers most severely during the prevalence of endemic, epidemic, or contagious disorders. . . . There is a great variety of chronic diseases, whose origin is excited, or whose progress is increased with frightful rapidity by inadequate nutrition ; and the number of persons amongst the poor, whose death is accelerated from this cause, it is melancholy to contemplate.

<sup>r</sup> It has frequently been observed, and charged against the poor, that they will buy nothing but the best bread, and other food ; alleging that they find it the best economy, as being the most nourishing. The above testimony of Dr. Howard seems to justify them in this practice.

It is amongst these habitual invalids that the greatest mortality occurs during periods of distress.”<sup>s</sup>

Even mental and moral imbecility are among the ordinary effects produced by deficiency of food, and habitual and gradual starvation.

“ A gradual deterioration of the moral and intellectual, as well as of the physical condition of man, is the more remote consequence of a slighter diminution in the supply of food; and, as vitally affecting the well-being and prosperity of a nation, has strong claims on the attentive consideration of the legislator. . . . The functions of the brain suffer equally with those of the other organs, and the mental powers exhibit a languor and dulness proportionate to the degree of the physical debility. The sufferer is listless and depressed, and often manifests a remarkable apathy to his condition. . . . Mania or mental imbecility has sometimes been pro-

<sup>s</sup> Inquiry into the Morbid Effects of Deficiency of Food, pp. 4, 38, 39.

duced by defective nutrition. The former is the common effect of sudden privation of food, whilst the latter is the more frequent consequence of gradual starvation."

"It may perhaps be thought by some that I have given an exaggerated description of the effects of defective nutrition on the intellectual faculties and moral feelings; but I believe those who are most familiar with the condition of the poor, when suffering from sickness and the despair of poverty, will recognise the fidelity of the picture I have drawn."

"This effect of inadequate nutrition in retarding intellectual development in children, is often very conspicuous amongst the families of the indigent poor. They exhibit none of that intelligent vivacity and quickness which children who have been plentifully supplied with nutritious food display. Their mental operations and physical movements are equally slow and languid, and their countenances want that look of intelligence and animation which a full develop-

ment and early exercise of the brain alone give. Hence the pernicious results of deficiency of food in early life are not confined to arresting the physical growth, and rendering the frame puny and feeble, but, by checking the cerebral development and the expansion of the intellectual faculties, favour that moral debasement and mental barbarism, so much to be lamented in the lower classes, and to which so many of their miseries and so much of their poverty are attributable. The baneful effects of defective nutrition may thus be shewn to extend their influence to the social condition and habits of the poor, to affect materially their position as moral and intelligent beings, and to bear powerfully upon matters with which, at first sight, it might appear to have little connexion.”<sup>t</sup>

<sup>t</sup> Inquiry into the Morbid Effects of Deficiency of Food, pp. 2, 19, 27, 31, 42, 44. It would be an error to attribute all the want of vivacity and intelligence among the children of the poor to want of sufficient nourishment. Great languor, and tameness, and want of playfulness, are observable among the children in

But the diseases more ordinarily engendered by habitual low living and deficiency of food are—scrofula in all its varied forms, tubercles, dyspepsia, diarrhœa, dysentery, scurvy, petechiæ, dropsy, an ulcerated state of the mouth and throat, chronic ulcers, &c. Paraplegia also, paralysis, apoplexy, fever, water in the head, consumption, are among the diseases more or less frequently arising from deficiency of food among the destitute poor.<sup>u</sup>

People in general, however, have little workhouses, even when they are not insufficiently fed. Continual restraint, and want of air and exercise, and the being closely crowded together, which is especially hurtful to children, are partly the occasion of this depression. But deficient nourishment is a very general cause of want of energy and cheerfulness among poor people's children.

<sup>u</sup> Inquiry into the Morbid Effects of Deficiency of Food, pp. 16, 20, 21, 40, 41, 63. Typhus fever especially most frequently results from long-continued misery and destitution. (See Mendicity Society's 10th Report, 1828, p. 37 ; 21st Report, 1839, p. 29 ; Begging-Letter Department, c. 54,305.)

or no idea that these complaints, when they are developed, can have had their origin in any way from a deficient supply of food. Even medical men, being engaged in removing the symptoms of the specific disease, have not their attention called to the origin of it, and become but very imperfectly acquainted with the real predisposing causes of the complaints of this nature which they are called upon to cure. The closest attention and examination are not sufficient to discover the true source of many of these maladies, when they have been gradually brought on by low living and insufficient diet, or a mere predisposition has been ripened into flagrant symptoms by this cause, which would otherwise have been subdued by the vigour of the constitution. " Even if any suspicion is aroused that a person has died of starvation, and a *post mortem* examination instituted to ascertain its probability, if structural disease of any important organ is found, it is too generally assumed as a matter of course that death



has arisen from natural causes. Yet no conclusion can be more fallacious.”<sup>v</sup>

But even the peculiar and characteristic symptoms and state of body caused by defective nourishment have been very little attended to, and are ill understood.

One point to which I would particularly draw attention, is the very great similarity of the symptoms produced by intoxication to those which follow upon exhaustion from any causes, but particularly that which arises from abstinence from food. It has been noticed that starvation sometimes produces apoplexy. It also produces delirium, lethargy, dizziness. It produces languor, giddiness, swimming in the head, staggering, stupor. “In many respects the symptoms in these cases have considerable resemblance to the effects of exposure to cold;”<sup>w</sup> which are known to be, unwillingness to move, torpor, drowsiness. All these are conclusive proofs of intoxication to ordinary observers.

<sup>v</sup> Morbid Effects of Deficiency of Food, p. 40.

<sup>w</sup> Ibid. pp. 20, 27, 66.

But there is another point in relation to this topic, which is the subject of much ignorance, and mistake, and harsh judgment. The symptoms are at the best equivocal, as has been just mentioned. But if, when a wretched sufferer is exhibiting these equivocal symptoms, the smell of spirits, in however slight degree, should be detected upon him, then the judgment and sentence is no longer delayed, but he is set down in a moment for a disgusting drunkard and a worthless impostor. But this conclusion is too hasty. One of our harsh and ignorant judgments in respect of the poor is, that all use of ardent spirits is injurious; and that every one who touches them is a gin-drinker. This opinion is erroneous. Spirits are a useful and wholesome medicine to the poor,<sup>x</sup> and necessary to them under the exposure, and chill, and exhaustion, to which they are subject in pursuing many of their arduous callings, in cold, and wet, and misery. But

<sup>x</sup> It must be recollected that wine is too expensive in this country for the poor to make use of it.

there is something more to be said, in excuse at least, if not in praise of the moderate use of spirits, which ought to weigh with those who, looking upon the poor in general as an inferior order of beings, ought not to expect of them self-discipline beyond the ordinary standard of human nature.

“Narcotics, particularly opium and tobacco, have the power of relieving the pangs of hunger, and the feeling of exhaustion consequent upon long fasting. The former is constantly used in eastern countries for this purpose, when food cannot be procured; and the property which the latter possesses in this respect is well known to sailors, who find relief from it when suffering from scarcity of provisions.”<sup>y</sup>

It is well known that spirits have a similar operation, and produce the same effect. That they are frequently used for this purpose is but too well known to those who are conversant with the distresses and sufferings of the poor, and the temptations they are

<sup>y</sup> Morbid Effects of Deficiency of Food, p. 52.

subjected to. The numbers whom distress of mind and wretchedness have driven to the use of ardent spirits, for the sake of drowning their miserable thoughts and intolerable reflections, is so great, that it affords a grave doubt whether more persons are driven to poverty by drinking, or by poverty to drunkenness.<sup>z</sup>

But these cases are not necessary to our present subject. We have mentioned them here because the occasion introduced them, and afforded the opportunity; and they are facts which ought to be known and recollected by those who are desirous to form a right estimate of the character and condition of the working-classes. Upon the pre-

<sup>z</sup> The vestry-clerk of St. Giles's made a return to the rector of Bloomsbury of 170 drunkards in the workhouse. It appeared that of these, two to one at least had become drinkers from poverty, and only one in three were poor from being drunkards.—“ Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.” (Prov. xxxi. 6, 7.)

sent topic we have only to suppose that a destitute person has taken a single glass of spirits from any of these causes. What says Dr. Howard of such an occasion ?

“ It is not uncommon for individuals exhausted with abstinence to become giddy, stagger, and fall down senseless in the street. As soon as he is discovered, he is perhaps conveyed to an hospital, stupified and cold, with almost suspended action of the heart and respiration, and unable to answer questions. Now, let us suppose that the miserable condition of the sufferer had attracted the pity of some passer-by, and that he had expended the pittance bestowed upon him at a dram-shop, with the hope of reviving his prostrated strength ; the alcoholic draught would very probably, by its powerful effect upon so exhausted a frame, hasten that insensibility it was taken to avert. When in this state, his breath would be perceived to be tainted with the smell of spirits, and he would probably be considered by those who saw him to be in a state of disgusting in-

toxication, and left neglected to perish from cold and exhaustion. Such is by no means a rare case, and one which all who have been long attached to a public medical charity must have witnessed. The stupor, staggering, occasional wandering of mind, and insensibility, consequent on exhaustion from starvation, are constantly mistaken by the public for intoxication ; and though, in the state of the pulse and pale collapsed appearance of the countenance, the medical man has symptoms to guide him, yet if an individual in the insensibility of intoxication has been exposed to cold, the pulse becomes so much reduced, and the countenance so much altered, as to afford no certain criterion.”<sup>a</sup>

The effect of a single glass of liquor upon an empty stomach is well known to be greater than large quantities under opposite circumstances. It will bring on a fit of insanity, where there is a predisposition to it. Even wholesome food, hastily administered, will have too exciting an effect.

<sup>a</sup> Morbid Effects of Deficiency of Food, pp. 66, 67.



“I once knew an instance,” writes Dr. Howard, “where a copious draught of milk, given to a woman in a state of great exhaustion from fasting, immediately brought on giddiness, and caused her to stagger and fall down.”<sup>b</sup>

I have adverted to these cases in which the smell of liquor may be added to the other proofs, because they are very strong cases, and instances in which the most conclusive evidence might seem to be afforded of vicious drunkenness; nevertheless with injustice. But these are by no means the most general instances. In by far the larger number of cases, the evidences of intoxication which are received as conclusive are such only as those above enumerated. But the bias and willingness produced by the numerous books which have been written against the poor, containing heavy charges and instances of imposture, which are greedily received and circulated, is sufficient, in this state of doubt, to turn the balance against the defenceless,

<sup>b</sup> Morbid Effects of Deficiency of Food, p. 71.



and to lead the vast majority to identify the symptoms of vice with the symptoms of misery, and to conclude that all the signs of wretchedness which they see, are signs only of imposture.

An elderly woman was found, late at night, crouching upon the pavement. She had nothing on but one filthy and miserable garment, which did not cover her; and was unable to walk without being supported. She was brought to St. G——'s workhouse, and refused admittance, upon the ground of her being drunk, and of her own statement that her lodging was in St. P——'s. She was carried to the station-house, where she sunk upon the floor, and afterwards to St. P——'s workhouse, upon a shutter. They administered restoratives, but she died before morning. When her lodging was examined, a few rags only were found in it, and a crust in a corner.

Catharine Green, aged nineteen, was a servant out of place. A lady saw her fainting from want of food. She had not lodged

in a house for six nights. Her character was perfectly good.<sup>c</sup>

Many other interesting details might be entered upon respecting the actual effects of deficiency of food among the poorest classes, and the different conditions which they exhibit. Positive starvation, or death from total deprivation of food, very rarely occurs among the poor ; and this is what is usually meant by being starved to death. The poor, at least, have always a sufficiency of water ; and it is known that water alone will protract life for many weeks, when total want of nourishment is fatal in a few days. For this cause this occasion of death among the poor has been less attended to. Habit also will regulate in a great degree the quantity and nature of the food that will be found requisite. A plant, as well as the human body, may grow and be nurtured for a long time upon water alone ; but no one can suppose that a plant so nurtured would be equally strong and healthy. I fully believe that the

<sup>c</sup> Mendicity Society's 4th Report, 1822.

constitutions of the poor acquire by habit the power of deriving a greater proportion of nourishment from the air than we do.<sup>d</sup> But this cannot be supposed to be a healthy state of existence. Another topic might be, the want of appetite which is consequent upon habitual want of food; and the want of impatience, and apathy and indifference to their own state, which are consequent upon the exhaustion of mind and body brought on by gradual starvation; both which cause this existing condition of the suffering poor to be little noticed.<sup>e</sup>

Mary Cardale, aged twenty-two, had nothing whatever to eat for three days, the 27th, 28th, and 29th February, 1840, till, on Saturday evening, her brother brought a pair of trousers, which her mother pledged for 1s. 3d. The mother had nothing during the

<sup>d</sup> There is no doubt but that the body derives much nourishment from the air. The weight of air which we breathe is ordinarily three times the weight of the solid food which we eat in the twenty-four hours.

<sup>e</sup> See Dr. Howard's Inquiry, pp. 23, 29, 30.

same time, except that she called at a friend's on the second day, who gave her a cup of tea and a little bit of meat. The daughter tasted nothing but water. She fainted twice or three times on the third day. They were both ill the day following, from eating too heartily after so long fasting.

I have no doubt, from my experience, that such cases are common ; but the proof is very unfrequently so good as it happened to be in this case. They are remarkably decent people.

A brushmaker, of good character, had only a mess of water-gruel last Christmas-day ; and the same on other days.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>f</sup> The following was the week's subsistence of John Malony (a man of excellent character, but weak health), his wife and three children, aged eight and seven years, and nine months.

Thursday, Dec. 19, 1839. Three pounds of potatoes, one pennyworth of cabbage, and a bit of salt to boil the cabbage with.

Friday 20. Five pounds of potatoes, and nothing with them.

Enough has been said in illustration of the present topic—the extent of extreme suffering among the lowest classes from deficiency of nourishment.

But the miseries and sufferings above described, especially those which arise from low living, are by no means confined to the labouring classes. The distress existing among the lower class of shopkeepers, and this in numerous instances, is not much less in degree than that which has been exhibited ;

Saturday 21. Five pounds of potatoes. Two half-penny herrings.

Sunday 22. Two halfpenny loaves, of which the boy took a piece in his pocket to church and the Sunday-school, and half an ounce of chocolate to make a drink for the husband, who was ill.

Monday 23. Four pounds of potatoes.

Tuesday 24. Two shillings and sixpence was given by the clergyman, with which they purchased candles, tea and sugar, oatmeal, and three half-quartern loaves.

Wednesday 25. The remains from yesterday, and five pennyworth of rashers of bacon, three pounds of potatoes, three pennyworth of milk to dress with some spoonsful of sago, which had been given for the husband, who was ill, and a halfpenny-worth of linseed.

and it is much heightened in poignancy by the circumstance, that most persons in these cases have fallen from a comparative state of ease, independence, and comfort. Some fall even from the higher ranks into the most abject distress. Many men brought up at Eton, and doubtless at other principal schools also, have been applied to on account of others, their contemporaries, who have come to great poverty. There is nothing but liberal assistance to prevent such persons from falling to the condition of mere beggars; and such cases do occur.

The following passage is met with in Dr. Conelley's report, the physician to the Hanwell Lunatic Asylum for the county of Middlesex. It forcibly convinces us of the hard struggle for existence which is maintained by large numbers of the low and middle classes.

“ Under the head of *causes* (of insanity) the blanks in the register are numerous. Those inserted are, it will be seen, in a great number of instances, referable to poverty,

and the general struggle of the poorer and middle classes for existence.”<sup>g</sup>

Of 281 cases, there were—

From reverses . . . . .	24
From poverty directly . . . . .	23
From grief . . . . .	23
From intemperance, which, in a majority of instances, is caused by distresses . . .	37
	<hr/>
	107

I forbear to multiply instances of this kind. Suffice it to say, that such cases are numerous, if people are willing to acquaint themselves with them. Some of those already mentioned have been of this description; and I refer to others out of the Reports of the Mendicity Society,<sup>h</sup> because they

<sup>g</sup> 51st Report of Hanwell Lunatic Asylum, 1839, p. 31.

<sup>h</sup> Mendicity Society's Report, 1820, c. 5592; *ib.* c. 5798. Report, 1821, c. 9524—widow with six children, one ruptured. Report, 1820, c. 5582—a miller. Report, 1823, c. 16,354—a woman who left her helpless father and two children, and attempted suicide,



may there be inquired into. But I would recommend the reading of the whole series of that society's reports, as calculated to give an instructive, though not a perfect picture of the poor ; and though by no means devoid of harshness, as being a society having the suppression, and not the relief of mendicants, for its primary object.

not bearing to see them perish. Report, 1824, c. 17,319—an officer in the army. Report, 1826, c. 20,033 ; ib. c. 20,124 ; ib. c. 20,532—a girl highly educated. Report, 1828, c. 22,256—a master silk-weaver ; ib. c. 22,036—a cabinet-maker, with ten children ; ib. c. 33,030—a medical man, who had become security. Report, 1830, c. 24,230—lieutenant of marines, son insane. Report, 1835, c. 22,722—son of a lord mayor. Report, 1837, c. 31,355—medical man. Report, 1839, c. 34,112—fever from low living. These are all cases of persons reduced to the condition of street-beggars.

## CHAPTER III.

### *The Causes of Poverty.*

NUMBER OF CHILDREN—ECONOMY OF THE POOR—  
ILLNESS—OLD AGE, AND WIDOWHOOD—DESER-  
TION BY HUSBAND—WANT OF EMPLOYMENT—  
LOSS OF TOOLS, AND CLOTHES—COMING TO LON-  
DON—SHIPWRECK, AND OTHER ACCIDENTS—  
WANT OF SETTLEMENT—DIFFICULTY OF OBTAIN-  
ING PARISH RELIEF—INSUFFICIENCY OF PARISH  
RELIEF—VICE—DRUNKENNESS—WEAKNESS OF  
CHARACTER—SEDUCTION—PROSTITUTION.

It is impossible to enumerate all the causes of poverty, or the half of them. They are as various as the circumstances of life; the changes and chances of which are infinite. But individuals, acquainted as they are each with their own peculiar situation, cannot themselves tell in what quarter they are likely to meet with reverses; and those who have observed the providences which have befallen them, will have found that the greatest joys and blessings, the greatest evils and reverses, have generally come to them from a quarter in which they were least

looked for, and at a time when they were least expected. In every station we are subject to these visitations. We may have fortified ourselves by all manner of worldly entrenchments and securities—we may have built our barns as great as you please, and stored them as plentifully; but every fortress yet erected by man has already been pulled down by man from its height and confidence, and the greatest store has ever proved to be as a heap of snow or sand, under the disposing hand which specially orders all the events that happen to us.

What, then, must the case be with those who live from hand to mouth, and have but one dependence! whose whole support is in the strength of one arm, the vigour of one mind, the health of one frame, the credit of one name, the integrity of one character. The former are not a whit less in the hand or under the control of Providence; and examples are abundant, if proof of it were our present purpose. But in these cases his support and our dependence are more di-

rectly seen and acknowledged. In these, too, God delights more especially to shew his providence and power for good and for ill; to awaken trust and dependence, and exercise faith. Their reverses also and changes are sent for the use and instruction of the rich, and are intended as exercises for their study and benevolence.

The accidents of life are as various as the circumstances of it. The reverses of trade and of the labouring poor are subject to no rule or classification, though certain causes of distress are much more prevalent than others. This is a truth which ought especially to be kept in mind. It is an answer to those who establish universal causes of poverty. Neither idleness, nor vice, nor the unequal division of property, nor want of education, nor all these together, nor a hundred more than these, are the causes of all the poverty which exists; no one can tell, or ascertain, or guess at, all the causes from which poverty arises. Every such pretension must be defeated by the next day's

investigation ; and any general rules by which we may bind ourselves must work injustice, and will be more and more defeated by a wider and more impartial experience. “The poor shall never cease out of the land ;” and if all the present causes were provided against, still would God in his own way, and by his own means, fulfil his own decree, which was given for our use ; and still must it ever be the duty of the rich to keep the poor and poverty continually under their eye—to look upon it, to acquaint themselves with, and minister to it.

Wetherby’s shop in Fleet Street, near St. Dunstan’s Church, was taken down to widen the street. A jury awarded him a compensation. The situation of the shop had been very favourable, from its prominent projection into the street. He took another house half-way down Fleet Street, and endeavoured to re-establish himself. His customers did not follow him. He did his best to form a new connexion, but failed. He was forced to give up the house and the shop-

front, and took the first floor only, as a lodger, in the same house. He was soon obliged again to retire to the second floor; and in a short time he became completely and irretrievably ruined.

A shopman of Davis, the great linen-draper in Lamb's Conduit Street, who had served him faithfully for many years, having retired, and tried other things, was desirous to return to his post behind the counter; but no one would take him, in spite of his excellent character. The whole style and manner of shopkeeping had been altered in the meantime, and no one would hire a man who was more than five-and-twenty years old. The man therefore became a beggar.

This Davis above mentioned experienced a remarkable fall, becoming himself completely ruined. The shopman just described was asked whether Davis had not been ruined by drinking; to which he replied, that Davis did not become ruined by drinking, but that he took to drinking because he was ruined; that the cause of his ruin was his taking an

active part in the vestry of St. Andrew's, Holborn, which caused him to neglect his business.

But so many are daily injured in their trade by devotion to politics, that this ought hardly to be mentioned as an extraordinary case.

The most general causes of distress are :  
A great number of children—Old age—Illness—Desertion by husband—Want of employment—Want of tools, clothes, &c.—Coming to London—Shipwreck, and other accidents—Want of a settlement, as Irish, Scotch, Foreigners—Difficulty of obtaining parish relief—Insufficiency of parish relief, and of the provision made by law—Vice, especially drunkenness—Weakness of character—Seduction—Prostitution.

I will proceed to give some account of these several causes of poverty, repeating again, that the particular causes being for ever new, and infinitely various, each case must be viewed and dealt with according to its own circumstances; although much in-



struction and experience may be derived from contemplating distress in some of its more prevailing forms and most general aspects.

## NUMBER OF CHILDREN.

A man of great good sense and experience used to say to me, "Every man with a large family is a poor man, whatever his fortune may be;" and I believe that the experience of every observing person will justify this conclusion. Not that a numerous family is a misfortune—for, on the contrary, it is a blessing—but the blessings of it are generally such as are consistent with narrowness of pecuniary means, or arise out of it.

How the poor manage to live, is a perfect miracle. No one who is in a higher rank could make out a calculation how a poor family with two or three children could be supported, clothed, and housed, for the average earnings of working people in any particular locality; the poor themselves do not

know how they live. Contrivances by which they are enabled to exist are found and adopted; and the household economy of a clever and thrifty housewife among the poor is truly extraordinary. The poor are said to waste a great deal. It is said that they ought to save; and that they would get things much cheaper, if they would lay in a stock at wholesale prices, instead of dealing with the little retail-shops, which charge so extravagantly. This observation is founded upon an ignorance of life. Is it to be supposed that the complicated plan of society ought to be wholly reconstructed? or that trade has not fallen into those divisions and arrangements which are most convenient and suitable to the various wants and circumstances of life?<sup>a</sup> The whole system and machinery among

<sup>a</sup> Every good economist knows, that it is better to buy the exact quantity you want, and not to lay in a stock merely because you can get a bargain. The opportunity of purchasing things in the smallest quantities, though dearer, chiefly constitutes the economy of living in London.

the poor is a wonder, and incalculable, and quite beyond the contrivances of those who profess to redispense society upon philosophical and Utopian principles. More good may be done by improving and using well the present order of things than by new systems. The pawn-shops are an essential ingredient in the economy of the poor in towns; but they may be the subject of improvement.

The poor are also said to live extravagantly and luxuriously when they have the means, and to waste a great deal of money, which they might save, in this way. To this it ought, in the first place, to be answered, that though good living is to us a vulgar enjoyment, and one which is little required or valued, because we may have many other fertile resources, yet to the poor it is almost the only enjoyment in which they can indulge. It is also a useful and necessary one. I believe that the full and superfluous living in which the poor indulge occasionally, alone enables thousands of them to

exist during the want and deficiency which come upon them in turn. The habit of the body can accommodate itself to these changes, even at long intervals, though at the sacrifice of the constitution. Thus life is saved for the present, and starvation is protracted. We who take our meals at regular intervals should think it a great privation if our dinner were delayed for two or three hours—much more, if we had eaten nothing in the morning till the hour of dinner. But the necessities of the poor enable them by habit to go without a meal for a day, or even more, without any present very evil consequences ; though not without the necessary and permanent effects of insufficient nourishment.

I do not mean to say that there is not great neglect and extravagance among workmen who earn the highest and most regular wages. These are not the poor, however ; they are rather the rich, though by their extravagance they also may become beggars.

Some idea of the household economy of the poor may be derived from a few ex-

amples. The clippings and trimmings of tongues and hams, from the ham and tongue warehousemen, are a cheap article of nourishing diet, and are much sought after by some thrifty housewives. The tobacco-pipes that have been used without being broken are sent in numbers from the public-houses to be rebaked ; the unburnt tobacco which is left in the bowls is taken out, and is an article of considerable traffic as a cheap tobacco.

A mess of potatoes flavoured with a red herring is a usual diet of the Irish.

But some of the most remarkable economies among the poor are in the article of clothing. Clothes descend by infinite gradations from the rich to the poor, by gift, exchange, and sale, after continual repair. The class of persons who repair and restore shoes are called *translators*. They are very numerous ; and shoes are scarcely ever thrown away so long as the upper-leather holds together. Women's shoes, thus translated, may be purchased at twopence, twopence-halfpenny, fourpence, and sixpence, very

good ; the best, ninepence ; men's at eighteenpence. Sometimes two odd shoes will be purchased instead of a pair, by some great economist, which come on that account still cheaper.

It must be understood, however, that these are mere shifts, rather than good economy. They are resources in distress, without which the poor could not get on. But the best economy for men in good work is to get new things, except shoes perhaps. A good suit of corderoy or fustian will last a year. The price in London would be about 16s.

I have said that the poor themselves do not know how they live. It is almost impossible to ascertain the current expenses of people who live from hand to mouth, and cannot therefore follow a system. It would be difficult with those who are regularly employed, and are the most prosperous. The following is the nearest approximation which I have been able to make, in the country, in a case of some urgency and interest.

Dame Mott, aged 50, of Ticehurst, Sussex, had five persons to feed—herself and four daughters, aged 16, 14, 12, and 10; and three more to wash for—namely, two sons, aged 25 and 22; and a daughter, aged 18. Her whole income, made up by what her elder children allowed her, and parish allowance, was 10*s.* 6*d.* a week. Her weekly expenses were thus apportioned:

	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Five gallons flour, at 1 <i>s.</i> 3 <i>d.</i> . . .	6	3
Half-pound butter, at 10 <i>d.</i> . . .	0	5
One and a half pounds cheese, at 7 <i>d.</i> . . .	0	10½
Half-ounce tea, at 5 <i>s.</i> . . .	0	2½
Half-pound sugar, at 6 <i>d.</i> . . .	0	3
Half-pound salt, at 1 <i>d.</i> . . .	0	0½
Yeast . . . . .	0	4
Half-pound candles, at 6 <i>d.</i> . . .	0	3
Quarter-pound soap, at 8 <i>d.</i> . . .	0	2
Half-ounce starch, at 1 <i>d.</i> . . .	0	0½
Blue . . . . .	0	0½
Weekly rent . . . . .	1	6
	<hr/>	
	10	4½

Leaving her 1½*d.* over.

Besides this, she had a moderate-sized garden, which supplied them with vegetables.



It is to be observed that, in this bill of fare, there is no meat whatever; and nothing is allowed for clothes, nothing for firing, and they had no pig. One gallon of flour, or two quartern-loaves, one and a half ounces of butter, and five ounces of cheese, was the staple support of each person for the week.

Though there is something peculiar in this case, in respect of the sources of income—the sons being grown up, and contributing to the fund;—yet this may afford a sample of the ordinary case of a man and wife, and three children, the man earning ten shillings a week. But a working man must eat more than a woman or child; and the rest must suffer in proportion.

If the condition of a man with three children be such as this, and so difficult, what must be the case of a family where there are six or ten?

No experience or ingenuity can devise the means by which a family of six or eight children may be maintained at the ordinary

wages of labour in most parts of the country, under the usual circumstances of occasional illness and accident, and slackness of employment—things which must come from time to time upon all trades and persons. And yet there are people who set down all distress to want of care and forethought, and are ready to say to every poor man, “ You would never have come to poverty, if you had saved as you ought to have done ; your distress is all your own fault, and I should only be encouraging you and making you worse by now relieving you.”

Let any one who has a family calculate what the necessary food and clothing of a single child costs him, and multiply this by six and ten, and remember that children are not fed cheaper by wholesale, and that a poor child requires a no less quantity of nourishment than a rich one, and that one of the most economical kinds of food is the best bread,—and say in what way it is possible for ten, or even six children to be maintained with food, clothing, lodging, washing,

and firing, upon ten shillings a week in the country, and twenty shillings in towns, barring interruptions and accidents. Having explained this miracle,—and it is one which is wrought, by God's help, and not by man's ability, continually,—let him next say how much may be saved under the circumstances against accidents and illness. If he should fail in this attempt, he must then admit that there may be cases of distress without culpability, among those who have large families of children at all events; and he will not be surprised at meeting with such cases occasionally:—unless indeed, perhaps, our modern philosopher should pronounce, that no man ought to marry without calculating upon the probability of seven children at the least, the likelihood of a six-weeks' fever once a year, a broken limb, or other such accident. There are some, we know, who are ready to say this; and, moreover, that a wife is too great a luxury, which a poor man ought not to indulge in; and that education would soon convince them of it.

The following are the actual weekly expenses of three different families in London, where the man was in full work. They will furnish a standard from which to estimate the condition of larger families, or of families where, from illness or other causes, the expenses are increased, or the employment is irregular.

Richard Goodwin, 45 Great Wild Street :  
a wife and five children.

	£.	s.	d.
2 oz. tea . . . . .	0	0	8
7 oz. coffee . . . . .	0	0	10½
3 lbs. sugar . . . . .	0	1	9
1 cwt. coals . . . . .	0	1	8
½ bushel coke, and wood . . . . .	0	0	7
12 loaves, at 8d. . . . .	0	8	0
18 lbs. potatoes . . . . .	0	0	9
1½ lbs. butter . . . . .	0	1	6
1 lb. soap, ½ lb. soda . . . . .	0	0	7
Blue and starch . . . . .	0	0	2
Candles . . . . .	0	0	7
Bacon . . . . .	0	2	6
Greens or turnips, onions, &c. . . . .	0	0	6
Pepper, salt, and mustard . . . . .	0	0	3
Carry forward . . . . .	1	0	4½

	£.	s.	d.
Brought forward . . . . .	1	0	4½
Herrings . . . . .	0	0	9
Snuff . . . . .	0	0	6
	<hr/>		
	1	1	7½
To this ought to be added about 6 <i>d.</i>			
a day for butcher's meat . . . . .	0	3	6
And rent . . . . .	0	4	0
	<hr/>		
	1	9	1½

And the wages of a man earning 30*s.* a week are wholly expended, leaving 10½*d.* for clothes, beer, medicine, tools, and other accidents and contingencies. These are the wages of a good carpenter, stonemason, bricklayer, plumber, glazier, &c.

—— Glover, 8 Little Wild Street: a wife and two children.

*Dec. 2 to Dec. 8, 1839.*

	£.	s.	d.
2 oz. tea, at 4 <i>s.</i> . . . . .	0	0	8
4 oz. coffee . . . . .	0	0	6
2 lbs. sugar . . . . .	0	1	2
7 4-lb. loaves . . . . .	0	4	8
1 lb. butter . . . . .	0	1	0
	<hr/>		
Carry forward . . . . .	0	8	0

	£.	s.	d.
Brought over . . . . .	0	8	0
18 lbs. potatoes . . . . .	0	0	9
1 lb. candles . . . . .	0	0	7
$\frac{1}{2}$ lb. soap, $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. soda, starch, and blue	0	0	$4\frac{1}{2}$
$1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. bacon . . . . .	0	1	0
Salt, pepper, mustard, and vinegar . . . . .	0	0	3
$\frac{1}{2}$ cwt. coals, 1 bushel coke, and wood	0	1	8
Table-beer . . . . .	0	0	9
Tobacco . . . . .	0	0	6
Herrings . . . . .	0	0	3
Greens and onions . . . . .	0	0	4
	<hr/>		
	0	14	$5\frac{1}{2}$
Add 6 <i>d.</i> a day for butcher's meat . . . . .	0	3	6
And 3 <i>s.</i> for rent . . . . .	0	3	0
	<hr/>		
	1	0	$11\frac{1}{2}$

In this bill nothing is put down for cheese or milk.

Man, wife, and five children; ages, 18,  
14, 11, 8, and 5. In Tavistock Mews.

*Saturday, Dec. 7, to Friday evening, Dec. 13, 1839.*

	£.	s.	d.
9 loaves . . . . .	0	6	9
Butter . . . . .	0	1	6
Tea . . . . .	0	1	0
	<hr/>		
Carry forward . . . . .	0	9	3

	£.	s.	d.
Brought over	0	9	3
Coffee . . . . .	0	0	10½
Sugar . . . . .	0	0	10½
Meat . . . . .	0	3	6
Potatoes . . . . .	0	1	2
Milk . . . . .	0	0	7
Cheese . . . . .	0	0	4
Pepper and salt . . . . .	0	0	1
Coals . . . . .	0	1	6
Candles . . . . .	0	0	7
Soap, starch, soda, blue . . . . .	0	0	7
	0	19	4
Add rent . . . . .	0	4	0
	1	3	4

Meat and milk are included in this list, but no beer, clothes, medicine, tobacco.

The following are three different scales of expenditure, corresponding to three different rates of wages, in London; namely, 30s., 20s., and 15s. Good mechanics' wages are from 25s. to 60s.; the average is 30s.: those of inferior workmen are less. This includes carpenters, joiners, cabinet-makers, smiths, masons, bricklayers, slaters, plas-



terers, plumbers, painters, glaziers, and all the building trade. They all require a stock of tools, and those of joiners are very expensive. Bricklayers and carpenters, though their tools are less expensive, earn nearly the same wages as joiners; because of the wear of health and clothes in working out of doors. Also, being unemployed in winter and wet weather, their wages in fact average less. The repair of a stone-dresser's tools will cost half-a-crown or three shillings a week, besides the worth of them. His wages are 24s.

Journeymen bakers earn from 15s. to 25s.; with an allowance of bread. Labourers' wages are from 10s. to a guinea a week, while employed. The regular wages are 15s. and 18s. A smith's hammerman earns 18s. to a guinea. But there are seasons of the year in which each trade is slack, and there is little doing. A wet day not only depresses all trade, but throws thousands of labourers, porters, workmen in the docks, &c. wholly out of employment. The day-wages in the

docks are 2s. 4d. and 2s. 6d. Porters and others earn what they can pick up. In wet days nothing but illness.<sup>b</sup>

The following tables are founded upon the experience of one himself accustomed to

<sup>b</sup> The following is a statement of wages, by an experienced assistant overseer of one of the largest parishes in London :—

Agricultural labourers . . . . .	9s. to 12s.
Excavators, and men employed on road-	
work . . . . .	about 18s.
Labourers in factories . . . . .	18s. to 21s.
Shoemakers . . . . .	12s. to 20s.
Plasterers and bricklayers . . . . .	18s. to 30s.
Carpenters . . . . .	21s. to 30s.
Tailors, if employed on contract or com-	
mon work . . . . .	12s. to 21s.
— if good workmen, and employed on	
better work . . . . .	24s. to 36s.
Mechanics generally from . . . . .	21s. to 42s.

This account may be taken as fairly representing the state of the great majority of work-people in and about London. It neither rises to the highest scale of first-rate mechanics, nor descends to the lowest and very numerous grade of jobbing and inferior workmen.

struggle with difficulties, and to see other people do so. He is at present employed as agent of a district visiting society. He says that it is impossible for a man, his wife, and three children, to subsist on less than 15*s.* a week earnings, without assistance.

A man, his wife, and three children, having 30*s.* per week:—

	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
5 4-lb loaves, at 8½ <i>d.</i> ; 1 quartern flour, 9½ <i>d.</i>	4	4
14 lbs. meat, at 6 <i>d.</i>	7	0
7 quarts porter, at 4 <i>d.</i>	2	4
1 cwt. coals	1	7
28 lbs. potatoes	1	3
¼ lb. tea, at 5 <i>s.</i> ; 1½ lbs. sugar, at 7 <i>d.</i>	2	1½
1½ lbs. butter, at 1 <i>s.</i>	1	6
1 lb. candles, 6½ <i>d.</i> ; 1 lb. soap, 6½ <i>d.</i>	1	1
Rent, 4 <i>s.</i> ; schooling, 6 <i>d.</i>	4	6
Clothes and sundries	4	3½
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	30	0

Another, having 20*s.* per week, the same number to support:—

	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
5 4-lb. loaves, at 8½ <i>d.</i>	3	6½
7 lbs. meat, at 5 <i>d.</i>	2	11
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Carry forward	6	5½

	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Brought over	6	5½
7 pints porter, at 2 <i>d.</i>	1	2
1 cwt. coals	1	7
28 lbs. potatoes	1	0
¼ lb. tea, at 5 <i>s.</i> ; 1½ lbs. sugar, at 7 <i>d.</i>	2	1½
1 lb. butter	1	0
1 lb. soap; ½ lb. candles	0	9½
Rent, 3 <i>s.</i> ; schooling, 6 <i>d.</i>	3	6
Clothes and sundries	2	4½
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	20	0

Another, having 15*s.* per week, the same number to support:—

	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
5 4-lb. loaves, at 8½ <i>d.</i>	3	6½
5 lbs. meat, at 5 <i>d.</i>	2	1
7 pints porter, at 2 <i>d.</i>	1	2
½ cwt. coals	0	9½
40 lbs. potatoes	1	4
3 ounces tea, at 5 <i>s.</i> ; 1 lb. sugar, at 7 <i>d.</i>	1	6
1 lb. butter	0	9
½ lb. soap; ½ lb. candles	0	6½
Rent, 2 <i>s.</i> 6 <i>d.</i> ; schooling, 4 <i>d.</i>	2	10
Sundries	0	5½
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	15	0

This is in cases where it is properly laid out; where it is wasted, of course, no account can be obtained.

The following cases of three widows, each having four children to support, are authentic:—

Elizabeth Sach, aged 34; Mary-Ann, 14; Emma, 10; Elizabeth, 5; Anne, 3.

6 *Little Russell Street*.—Rents a kitchen, 4*s.* 6*d.* a week. Does mangling; earned last week 4*s.* 6*d.*; this week, 10*s.* Owes ten weeks' rent; paid 4*s.* 6*d.* towards it last Tuesday. Mary-Ann at home, wants a place. Buried a son, William, that died Dec. 6, aged 12; he was in a place at 3*s.* a week. Received 10*s.* from the Mendicity Society, and paid 5*s.* out of it towards the funeral. Has 5*l.* of clothes in pledge; has a mother and sister, who assist a little; goes to them sometimes on Sunday to dinner.

*Expenditure.*

Dec. 15, 1839.	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Sunday. Potatoes, 1½ <i>d.</i> ; steak, 6 <i>d.</i>	0	7½
Monday. Meat, 5½ <i>d.</i> ; potatoes, 1 <i>d.</i> ; loaf, 4¼ <i>d.</i> ; tea and sugar, 4¾ <i>d.</i> ; butter, 3 <i>d.</i> ; candles, 1½ <i>d.</i> ; beer, ¾ <i>d.</i>	1	8¾
Tuesday. Coals, 4¾ <i>d.</i>	0	4¾
Wednesday. Liver and bacon, 4½ <i>d.</i> ; potatoes, 1 <i>d.</i> ; loaf, 4¼ <i>d.</i> ; soap, 3 <i>d.</i> ; soda, 1 <i>d.</i> ; blue, ¾ <i>d.</i> ; candles, 1½ <i>d.</i> ; tea and sugar, 4¾ <i>d.</i>	1	8¾
Carry forward	4	5¾

	s.	d.
Brought over	4	5 $\frac{3}{4}$
Thursday. Bacon, 3 <i>d.</i> ; potatoes, 1 <i>d.</i> ; butter, 3 <i>d.</i> ; tea and sugar, 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ <i>d.</i>	0	11 $\frac{3}{4}$
Friday. Coke, 9 <i>d.</i> ; potatoes, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ <i>d.</i> ; red herrings, 2 <i>d.</i> ; cheese, 1 <i>d.</i>	1	1 $\frac{1}{2}$
Saturday. Tea, sugar, and butter, 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ <i>d.</i> ; had some soup given; going to buy in evening, coals, 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ <i>d.</i> ; meat, 6 <i>d.</i> ; potatoes, 1 <i>d.</i> ; tea and sugar, 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ <i>d.</i> ; butter, 3 <i>d.</i>	1	9 $\frac{1}{2}$
	8	4 $\frac{1}{2}$

Had three 4-lb. loaves from the parish this week.

Ann Webb, aged 33; Henry, 11; James, 6;  
Ann, 5; Charles, 3.

20 *Plumtre Street*.—Rents a kitchen, 3*s.* a week;  
owes 18*s.* for rent. Does mangling; earned 9*s.* last  
week; 11*s.* this week. Has a boy, Edward, aged 9,  
in the workhouse.

#### *Expenditure.*

	s.	d.
Dec. 15, 1839.		
Sunday. Meat, 1 <i>s.</i> ; potatoes, 2 <i>d.</i>	1	2
Monday. Butter, 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ <i>d.</i> ; tea and sugar, 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ <i>d.</i> ; coals, 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ <i>d.</i> ; candle, 1 <i>d.</i> ; potatoes, 2 <i>d.</i> ; had soup given her	1	6 $\frac{1}{2}$
Carry forward	2	8 $\frac{1}{2}$

	s.	d.
Brought over	2	8½
Tuesday. Butter, 2½ <i>d.</i> ; tea and sugar, 3½ <i>d.</i> ; candle, 1 <i>d.</i> ; potatoes, 2 <i>d.</i>	0	9
Wednesday. Butter, 2½ <i>d.</i> ; tea and sugar, 3½ <i>d.</i> ; candle, 1 <i>d.</i> ; potatoes, 2 <i>d.</i> ; liver and bacon, 6 <i>d.</i> ; loaf, 8½ <i>d.</i> . Had a girl to help her at the mangle; gave her victuals	1	11½
Thursday. Butter, 2½ <i>d.</i> ; tea and sugar, 3½ <i>d.</i> ; candle, 1 <i>d.</i> ; potatoes, 2 <i>d.</i> . The girl there	0	9
Friday. Butter, 2½ <i>d.</i> ; tea and sugar, 3½ <i>d.</i> ; candle, 1 <i>d.</i> ; potatoes, 2 <i>d.</i> ; bacon, 3 <i>d.</i>	1	0
Saturday. Meat, 1 <i>s.</i> ; potatoes, 4 <i>d.</i> ; butter, 5 <i>d.</i> ; tea and sugar, 7 <i>d.</i> ; candles, 2 <i>d.</i> ; loaf, 4¼ <i>d.</i> ; cheese, 2½ <i>d.</i> ; loaf, 8½ <i>d.</i> ; coals, 9½ <i>d.</i>	4	6¾
	11	8¾

Had six 4-lb. loaves this week from the parish.

Elizabeth Whiting, aged 40; William, 17—  
at place, 1*s.* a week, has board and lodg-  
ing—mother washes for him; Eliza, 9;  
Anne, 7; Alfred, 5; Susanna, 3.

6 *Cottage Place, Kenton Street.*—Pays 3*s.* a week  
rent; owes 1*l.* 13*s.* Does charing and brushmaking;  
earned nothing this week; last week, 3*s.*; the week  
before, 5*s.* 8*d.*



*Expenditure.*

Dec. 15, 1839.

s. d.

Sunday. Bought on Saturday night: Potatoes,

1½*d.*; bacon, 2*d.*; candle, ½*d.*; tea andsugar, 2*d.*; soap, 1½*d.*; coals, 2*d.*; loaf,8½*d.* . . . . . 1 6Monday. Tea and sugar, 2*d.*; butter, 1½*d.*;candle, ½*d.* . . . . . 0 4

Tuesday. Coals . . . . . 0 2

Wednesday. Tea and sugar, 2*d.*; candle, ½*d.*;wood, ½*d.*; potatoes, 1*d.* . . . . . 0 4

Thursday. Coals . . . . . 0 1

Friday and Saturday . . . . . —

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2 5

Had five 4-lb. loaves this week from the parish.

The next case, detailing the expenditure of a man, a glazier, and his wife and two children, for fourteen days, and their means of living during the same period, is real, as well as can be ascertained; and is not far from the truth of many a real picture.

The situation of Daniel Cole, aged 27, painter and glazier. He is sickly, and can

work but little; wife, aged 23, hard-working, and of good character; two children; one aged three years, and the other suckling.

*Two weeks' provision, and the means of obtaining it.*

1839.	s.	d.
Nov. 23. Bought,—bread . . . . .	0	4½
Tea and sugar . . . . .	0	2
Coals . . . . .	0	1¼
Soap and candle . . . . .	0	2
Potatoes and herring . . . . .	0	1½
24. Bread . . . . .	0	4¼
Milk, coals, and potatoes . . . . .	0	2¾
25. Bread, tea, and sugar . . . . .	0	4½
Potatoes, herring, and coals . . . . .	0	2¾
26. Bread, milk, and potatoes . . . . .	0	5¾
Bacon, candle, tea, and sugar . . . . .	0	4¼
27. Bread, milk, and tea . . . . .	0	3½
28. Bread, bacon, and potatoes . . . . .	0	6
Tea, sugar, milk, candle, and coals . . . . .	0	4¼
29. Bread and milk . . . . .	0	1½
30. Bread and milk . . . . .	0	1½
Dec. 1. Went out.		
2. Bread, tea, sugar, coals, and candle . . . . .	0	7¾
3. Bread, potatoes, and bacon . . . . .	0	4
4. Tea, sugar, bread, and milk . . . . .	0	3½
Carry forward . . . . .	5	7¼

		<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
	Brought over	5	7½
Dec. 5.	Milk and coals . . . .	0	1¾
6.	Tea and sugar . . . .	0	2
		<hr/>	
		5	11
	Three 4-lb. loaves allowed by parish	1	9
		<hr/>	
		7	8
Nov. 25.	Stopped a square of glass	0	10
27.	Sold two chairs . . . .	1	6
30.	My wife earned . . . .	1	0
Dec. 1.	Sold a clock . . . .	2	0
4.	Pledged a saw . . . .	1	0
		<hr/>	
		6	4

I estimate the bought victuals, chiefly potatoes, at 24 lbs. : the bread given is also 24 lbs. in the fortnight—equal to 8 lbs. a week to each person, or 1 lb. 2½ ounces a day ; of which nearly half is potatoes. There is a little milk besides, chiefly for the tea.

Widow Humberston, aged 29 ; three children, 11, 8, and 5 ; and one six months.

Earned last week, 2*s.*

	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
One and a half ounces tea . . . .	0	6
Dripping . . . . .	0	1½
Firing . . . . .	0	3½
Rent . . . . .	1	6
	<hr/>	
	2	5

The parish allowed six 4-lb. loaves.

I have placed all these tables of expenditure here together, because I had entered upon the subject, and it was important and interesting that they should be seen at one view ; though some of them are more immediately applicable to other conditions and causes of poverty than the having a large family of children. They will all of them serve to illustrate the distresses to which those are subject whose earnings are ten shillings, five shillings, two shillings—nothing ; who have not even a settlement, to give them a claim upon any parish.

## ILLNESS.

The frequency of illness among the working classes, and the extent of the distress occasioned by it, ought to be understood. The feebleness of constitution and liability to disease consequent upon habitual deficiency of food among the already distressed, has been adverted to ; but our concern is now with those who have sufficient employ-

ment, and in whom illness is the immediate cause of destitution. The agricultural population, when work is plentiful, are comparatively healthy. But the manufacturing classes in towns, and artisans of most kinds, are much more subject to disease; and this is one among the many causes which place the working population of towns in a worse condition than the country people, and make the extent and degrees of distress among them much greater.

Dr. Howard, in the treatise above quoted, says that few are aware of the usually delicate state of health, and enfeebled constitutions, of these people; and that the mortality among the labouring classes is frequently aided by too long continued toil and exertion without adequate repose, insufficient clothing, exposure to cold, and other privations to which the poor are subjected. "Many even of those who regularly receive high wages live in dark cellars in the midst of filth, by which the atmosphere is rendered foul, and unfit for respira-

tion—a due circulation of air being impossible. Their families are ill fed, scantily clothed, and badly lodged; three or four persons being frequently crowded together in the same bed, which is often filthy and deficient of covering. Their houses are almost destitute of furniture, comfortless, and uncleanly; too often damp, cold, and ill ventilated. They live much on innutritious and indigestible food; and often use articles of bad quality, or such as are rendered unwholesome by adulteration, or by being kept too long. These evils are frequently promoted, and much increased, by their intemperate habits and extravagance.

“Then, again, many are occupied in sedentary employment, and pass the greater part of the day in heated, crowded, and ill-ventilated rooms; they take no regular exercise; they never breathe the fresh and invigorating air of the country, but constantly, day after day, inhale the same vitiated and loaded atmosphere. The vital function of respiration is thus but imperfectly per-

formed. Yet an uncontaminated atmosphere for the lungs is as essential to the maintenance of health, as a supply of wholesome food to the stomach; and it is impossible that the frame can continue vigorous under such a regimen.

“From the heated apartments in which the people employed in manufactures work, they too frequently rush into the open air without any additional clothing, whatever the weather may be. By these sudden transitions, inflammatory attacks of the lungs and stomach are continually occurring.

“Other causes affecting the health of the manufacturing population are, the protracted length of time they are confined daily at their work, the want of requisite repose, and the little leisure they have for relaxation and healthful recreation.

“A consideration of the foregoing facts is sufficient to shew that, at all times, even those of the greatest prosperity, a large proportion of the manufacturing classes is far from being in a state of vigorous health,



and that many of them are on the verge of actual disease.”<sup>a</sup>

In addition to the above picture, it is an experience of the utmost consequence that children suffer much more than grown people from being crowded together in close rooms. Yet this is the fate of children in general in thickly-peopled towns, where lodging is dear, and streets are confined and narrow, and little opportunity of running into the open air is afforded. It is considered a virtue to keep the children at home; and frequently the mother is forced to go out upon her business, and leave the children shut up in a room by themselves, as the only means of providing for them. In most cottages in the country there is at least a bedroom and a sitting-room. In London, and other towns, in addition to the other habits of confinement, the closeness of the rooms and alleys, and the infrequency with which they go out of them, there is rarely

<sup>a</sup> Inquiry into the Morbid Effects of Deficiency of Food among the Poor, pp. 3-8.

more than a single small apartment both for living and sleeping, on account of the expense of lodging.

The effect of great confinement and of unhealthy air upon children was evidenced by the investigation which preceded the passing of Jonas Hanway's act ; which requires that all workhouse children under five years of age should be sent into the country. Previous to this act, not a child born and brought up in a London workhouse was ascertained to have lived to the age of two years. Very few indeed of those born now in London workhouses live long enough to be taken from the nurses and sent into the country.

The great mortality among the children of working people in towns, even of such as are not sent to workhouses, is well known to persons who are in the habit of visiting them. And in many of those which survive, and grow up and become workmen, there can be no doubt that great feebleness of constitution and proneness to disease must be engendered by the same causes.

In addition to what has been stated, there are many employments which are in themselves unhealthy, and many diseases which are peculiar to particular trades and callings. Thus journeymen bakers are a peculiarly unhealthy class of men ; the shoemakers' and tailors' trades are not healthy ; there is a complaint called the painter's cholic, and fever ; chimney-sweepers are subject to a peculiar and distressing complaint. The dust from grinding pins is very injurious ; glass-blowing is hurtful to the lungs ; trades carried on in heat, from the subsequent exposure to cold, predispose to consumption.

Add to all this, the liability to accidents among workmen in all trades ; from which the independent and middle classes are comparatively free.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>b</sup> Reports of the Mendicity Society, 1822, c. 13,767, 14,841 ; 1828, c. 21,957, fall from a scaffold ; 1829, c. 23,222, kick from a horse ; 1830, c. 24,126, husband and wife both ill ; 1833, c. 27,481, millwright, lost an arm in the machinery ; 1836, c. 30,775, fall from scaffold ; 1838, c. 33,003, tailor, seven children, nearly all ill.

## OLD AGE, AND WIDOWHOOD.

Old age was partly the cause of distress in some of the cases above referred to ; in others it is the prevailing cause. An ordinary term of old age may perhaps be provided against. But when old age is protracted, and exceeds the usual limits ; and especially when it has been preceded by illness or widowhood, or other distressing circumstances ; any reasonable provision must be expected to fail ; and the case is similar to that of illness or accident in early life, before there has been any opportunity of saving.

Old age is a more frequent cause of distress among women ; especially widows. The distresses of these must be less culpable — admitting poverty to be a crime—since it is the husband's province to make provision ; and it has often been his crime or neglect which has occasioned the widow's want of ability. A woman has often exhausted her strength and means in bringing up a large family ; and these are, in her old age, unable or unwilling to assist her.

Of about 100 persons relieved by a monthly allowance at St. Giles's workhouse, the average age, in January 1836, was 71 ; at present it is 69. Of these, about 6 to 1 are women. Of two of the weekly lists the average age is 67 ; of the third it is 64.

In many cases, men as well as women outlive the power of providing for themselves ; and this not unfrequently from infirmities arising out of the nature of their trade. Watchmakers' eyes fail them ; and from the habit acquired in this delicate work, they are unfit for any other employment. Tailors also lose their eyesight, apparently from the nature of their occupation.

A peculiarly distressing class of cases is that of aged Irishmen, from 70 to 80 years of age, who have been 40 or 50 years in this country ; and to whom the overseers offer only a pass to Ireland, where they have no friends surviving.

## DESERTION BY HUSBAND.

These cases differ from that of widowhood, inasmuch as women are left widows mostly after their families are grown up, and able to provide for themselves, or even to assist their parents. But women deserted by their husbands are frequently burdened with a young and increasing family ; and are brought to their distress by a more sudden and heart-breaking calamity than even death itself. Sometimes a woman so circumstanced is just about to be confined ; more frequently has an infant in arms ; or perhaps discovers that her husband has another wife, so that she has not even a legal claim upon him for maintenance.<sup>c</sup>

## WANT OF EMPLOYMENT.

The extent in which want of employment operates to create distress is better known

<sup>c</sup> Reports of Mendicity Society, 1820, c. 5353 ; 1822, c. 14,263 ; 1825, c. 19,454, a former wife and family ; 1836, c. 30,392, 30,895.

than any other, because it presses upon a class of persons who will make their situation known; namely, the able-bodied. It, however, exists much more extensively than is at all known or believed; and is working hourly greater and greater misery, as well as immorality, with every increase of our so-called prosperity. Much has been said about the vastly greater numbers which are employed in each trade since the introduction of machinery; but few have taken the trouble to compare the rates of wages, or the facility of getting employment, before and since the use of machines in each manufacture.<sup>d</sup> The competition of machines with human skill in all the finer and more delicate branches of manufacture, and the

<sup>d</sup> At the latter part of the 17th century, agricultural labour earned the price of 24 loaves a week; in 1812 it earned the price of 12 loaves; and much less in 1813, when the price of bread was unusually high. It now earns from 12 to 15 loaves. This change has been regular and gradual.—EDEN'S *State of the Poor*, v. iii. App. pp. 79, 102. *Poverty, Mendicity, and Crime*, p. 17.



degradation of human labour to the lowest and most simple offices—being, for the most part, such as mere children can perform, and, in many cases, little more varied or skilful than the office of a scullion watching a spit, —might, on the very face of it, be supposed likely to depreciate the worth and wages of human handicraft. But this is too plain for the lovers of philosophy and fine reasoning, who would much rather be led round about and away by a subtle and intricate theory, than straight onward by experience. It is a simple fact, that want of work and distress among the poorer classes are daily becoming more urgent, with our advance in contrivance and civilisation, and the increase of riches. It is not only the idle and incapable workmen who are unemployed, but the able, the industrious, and deserving, are frequently without the means of earning sufficient to support life.

But the greatest and most to be lamented depreciation is in the labour of women. A woman can scarcely support herself by

ordinary and regular labour, much less can she maintain her children, if she be left a widow. At the more refined sorts of work, those who happen to have the skill, and the employment also, may provide for themselves tolerably; but the number which can obtain work of these kinds is comparatively few indeed. Formerly we might have seen the cottagers in all parts of England sitting at their doors, and engaged busily from noon to evening in plaiting straw, making lace, and spinning. Thousands and thousands of girls and women gained a cheerful and easy livelihood by these employments. But now spinning is given to a woman, ever so able and willing to work, as a positive charity; for it cannot be made profitable. Young and old women remain at home idle, from the actual valuelessness of their labour. Women's skill and strength is depreciated down to being a superfluity and a burden; by which they are not only deprived of support, but are more and more degraded. A child is as good as a grown person; and

in those employments which still remain to females, girls are most frequently preferred to women : perhaps because they wait more humbly and obediently upon dumb and senseless machines. The grade of female understanding and skill which is in requisition is so low, that the sense of children best answers to the standard.

It is said, that there are still some parts of Buckinghamshire and Devonshire in which lace-making is practised with a lingering pertinaciousness by an industrious and poverty-stricken population. Straw-plaiting is still used in parts of Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and Bedfordshire. Even wool-spinning is still persisted in throughout the villages in the vicinity of Lavenham in Suffolk. The young girls there are still said to be spinners—to have their wheels, when the weather will allow them, out in the open air—to pursue their work and their gossiping stories sociably together,—occasionally beguiling their labour with a song, in the burden of which they all join

in chorus.<sup>c</sup> In Blackmoor Vale, Dorsetshire, and in some parts of Devonshire, the women may still be seen sitting at their cottage-doors working gloves and making thread buttons.

But the most urgent and painful of all distresses occasioned by want of employment, is that of young girls, maid-servants out of place.

The distresses and helplessness of this class of people exceed all that could be reckoned upon without actual experience. When young women are brought up from the country, and are far distant from their friends, who have little means of assisting them,—or, what is also frequently the case, have no friends at all in the world,—if they happen to lose their situations from their own folly, or necessity, or illness, or, what is quite as common, from the caprice of their mistresses,—they have no resource whatever, unless they happen to get another place before the little remains of their wages

<sup>c</sup> Scenes of Commerce, p. 235.

is expended. Mistresses frequently exercise the most culpable thoughtlessness and severity with regard to their maid-servants. They turn them off from mere capriciousness, or for a trivial error, and for a slight cause will refuse to give them a character; though with the best of characters they may often be a long time out of place. Without a character, if they have not friends to support them, they are almost inevitably driven to become outcasts of society, the victims of crime and disease, and all the most aggravated degrees of poverty and misery to which human nature can be subjected. Nothing can equal the rapid descent made by such people from character, comfort, joyousness, and delicacy, to the hungry, haggard, careworn look, the squalid filth, — to abandoned, helpless, hopeless, reckless misery! It is no uncommon thing to see these young creatures, when, at the moment of poverty first staring them in the face, they make their first application for help, still retaining all their neatness and delicacy, propriety of

manner, and sensibility. But all their other dresses are pawned, their wages are spent, their rent is in arrear, and they are threatened to be turned out of doors, and all their things to be seized. They have nothing, in fact, but the clothes they are wearing. They cannot even take them off to wash them, so as to preserve cleanliness. The friends who assisted them with needlework at first, have no more to furnish. Unless the helping hand is extended to them at this very moment, in the next hour they must be ranked with the most degraded of the human race, and sustain all those lowest and most irretrievable depths of misery which have been alluded to.

It would be well that mistresses should consider this a little more deeply; that they should have a few cases brought before them to make them more fully aware of the responsibility which attaches to them, as the proper guardians of their servants, especially those whom they have themselves induced to leave their homes for service, and



the dreadful precipice towards which they thrust them when they abandon them without protection.

There is no class of persons so little capable of helping themselves as servants. They are used to, and encouraged in, every comfort and luxury, much beyond the sphere in which they were brought up; and all this is provided for them without care or thought of any kind on their own part. They are provided for like the children of the family; and they are as little able almost to cope with the world, to sustain its rebuffs, and to contend with its difficulties, as those very children would be. They have never had occasion to use money except for dress or amusement. They know nothing about providing lodging, provisions, furniture, or other articles of household economy and necessity. Hence arises the ill success which generally attends servants who quit service, and set up in the world for themselves. But these calamities fall infinitely more readily upon young, delicate, and inexperienced maid-



servants ; and the consequences to them are infinitely more rapid and dreadful, as may be seen from some of the examples referred to.<sup>f</sup>

The number of cases in which maid-servants and others are discharged from the hospitals cured, or only partially cured, without any employment or provision, is very great indeed.

## WANT OF TOOLS.

A man's tools are his livelihood. A man's tools are his stock in trade ; upon the loss of which every man is a beggar, whatever may be his employment. A lawyer's books are

<sup>f</sup> Reports of Mendicity Soc. 1823, c. 15,731 ; 1831, c. 24,715 ; c. 24,716, strolling actors ; 1831, c. 24,742, a weaver ; 1822, c. 12,903, girl, aged 19, had not lodged in a house for six nights, of good character ; 1829, c. 23,723, discharged without a character ; 1833, c. 27,289, girl 21, master a bankrupt ; 1825, c. 1860 ; 1826, c. 20,591 ; 1837, c. 31,367 ; 1838, c. 32,168. These four last are maid-servants who lost their places from illness.

his tools of trade, a writer's wits, a banker's credit, a shopman's clothes, a clerk's handwriting, a servant's character, a carpenter's planes and chisels, a ploughman's strength, a porter's knot, a gardener's spade, a mower's scythe, a reaper's sickle,—the lowest stock of any man in trade is a bad voice and a song. Without these tools, each one of these several persons is at once a beggar; and those of them which cannot be taken away by sale or force, may be lost by illness. A singer's voice may be taken away by a cold. Health is a man's tools in every station. But the two proper subjects of this division are, the working tools of the mechanic, and clothes: the possession of which last is of the utmost necessity, and the want of which is the sufficient cause of many persons in various situations becoming beggars. A servant without clothes is wholly deprived of the means of getting a place. A writer, a clerk, a shopboy, a common porter, a charwoman, are equally unable to pursue their calling; and are beggared. Even me-

chanics are frequently disabled from going out to seek for employment, and needle-women to ask for work, by the single cause of want of clothing fit to shew themselves in;—sometimes for want of any clothing at all.

The state to which a person is reduced, when he has sunk to the condition of having but one suit of clothes, and no change whatever, is miserable beyond description. The clothes, from being constantly used, and never taken off, being worn day after day, and slept in, become filthy beyond every thing—offensive, unwholesome, and filled with vermin. This is the condition in which numbers of poor creatures exist before they are driven to the workhouse; and quantities of clothes of this sort are burnt at the workhouses to prevent infection. Their bodies are in a no less filthy state; as is shewn by the water of the baths in which they are washed immediately upon their reception. Such people, when washed and clothed, and recovered by wholesome living to a tolerable

state of health and strength, are frequently, by this means alone, placed in a situation to gain a livelihood, and to get up again in the world.

The loss of a mechanic's tools leaves a good and active workman entirely destitute.\* Sometimes these are taken for rent; sometimes they are lost or stolen; most frequently, through illness or the burdens of a large family, they have been sold one by one, or are in deposit at the pawnbroker's. Generally this leads to, or is accompanied with, other evils. Low living has preceded it; illness attends it; then the loss of bedding, clothes, and other furniture. The regular attendance having been interrupted, the

\* The value of a mechanic's tools is very great. A carpenter ought to have from 10*l.* to 15*l.* worth of tools; a joiner, from 20*l.* to 30*l.*; a cabinet-maker, from 30*l.* to 50*l.* The tools of superior mechanics are worth from 50*l.* to 100*l.* In the Report of the Mendicity Society for 1836, p. 28, the case of a carpenter is mentioned, whose tools, worth 50*l.*, were detained for the price of their conveyance to London.

master has hired another workman; and as trade is oftener falling than rising, it is a long time before he has occasion to employ another workman. When the employment is offered, then he has no tools to execute it; then shortly after, he has no clothes sufficient to enable him to go out and seek for it. At length he has no strength and health to do it, when work of some inferior description and tools are offered him; and he inevitably sinks to the lowest state of beggary and irrecoverable weakness, unless some one of the Christian school of almsgiving stretches out a helping hand to him in time, supports him from sinking deeper, gets him restored to health and place again, nurses him up through his gradual recovery of strength, position, and character, and sees him once more fairly launched in the world, with a freight and fair wind, and a haven before him.<sup>h</sup>

<sup>h</sup> Mendicity Society's Reports, 1823, c. 15,731, an actor, who had lost his wardrobe; 1832, c. 25,722, tools sold, and work offered; 1835, c. 29,623, tools

## COMING TO LONDON.

I have already noticed that multitudes of persons come to London to make their fortunes, and that numbers of these are reduced to distress by this very means. The prizes in this lottery are the highest; therefore crowds put into it. But the number of blanks is great in the same proportion; and this experience is not regarded. The London circle is a mine in which great fortunes are gained, and great numbers are ruined. The solitude of individuals is extreme in this populous desert; a man may travel onward and backward as unobserved in the midst of this busy and selfish crowd, as if he were surrounded only by the arid rocks and shrubs of the Arabian plain. Advertisement in consequence becomes the great and important art in large and crowded

stolen; 1834, c. 27,933, maid-servant, clothes pledged; 27,951, shoemaker; 1836, c. 26,944, a man-servant, his clothes pledged through illness; 30,137, tools worth 50*l.* detained for their carriage.

towns; and there is often more success in cleverly advertising, and the pursuit of notoriety, than in the ability to execute any work skilfully. The expense now incurred in advertisements is enormous, and greatly enhances the price of a ticket in this lottery of trade. Every man in the country is known to his neighbours; but this is but a small circle. A man obtains notoriety in London only through great exertion or good fortune; but having become known, it is to a very numerous and extensive acquaintance. Again, this notoriety and connexion is of the most capricious character. The shop which is in vogue to-day may be out of fashion and deserted after to-morrow. A fortune must be made in the first or second season, or not at all. But in the country a shopman is earning a subsistence for his family all his life, and leaves his business as an inheritance to his children. The consequence is, that though the largest fortunes are made, and the greatest prizes are gained in London, yet the disappoint-



ments too are greater and more frequent; and though inferior strength and cleverness necessarily suffer the greatest neglect and depression, where every thing that is most clever and perfect is sought after, yet very tolerable powers may be lost and wasted in this troubled sea of competition and chicanery, especially in persons who have not the front and energy to buffet with these noisy waves of riot and rivalry. Inequalities are ordained by God in respect of health, strength, energy, and talent, and all the powers which qualify a man to raise himself and to provide for his family; and where, as in London, the best of every thing is in demand, and adequately paid for, and where, consequently, every thing that is excellent in talent collects itself, it arises of necessity that any inferiority of power more obviously betrays itself, and being unequal to the high standard of every thing around it, is despised and neglected, and sinks even lower than its own naturally low level.

A very extensive mass of misery and suf-

fering exists among those whose abilities are unequal to the high standard existing and required in London. Workmen of this description are the first thrown out of employment, during the winter months, in times of difficulty and depression, and when the families leave London. These men bear the brunt of every bad season and relaxation in trade, having earned the least when they were in work; while the superior mechanics are kept employed, even at a loss, at their very high wages, lest their services should go elsewhere.

A good workman who earns five-and-thirty shillings a week is better worth his wages than one at twenty shillings. The superiority of good London workmen is so great, that a builder finds it better worth while to send London workmen into the country, and pay them a shilling a day extra, and all their expenses, than to employ country workmen. A good London bricklayer will not only do his work better, but he will lay twice as many bricks in a day as a country brick-

layer. The wages of the best workmen in London increase, and those of inferior men decrease ; while want of employment is more and more felt, and these last bear the whole burden of it.

These are some of the causes of the greater extreme of misery which prevails in the metropolis and other large towns, and of the failures of those who come to make their fortunes in them. But there are other causes to be found ; among which are, the increased selfishness, pride, exclusiveness, forgetfulness of duty and responsibility, and other defects of moral character, which are engendered by the habits of society in capital towns, and the excessive hurry of life and intensity of occupation which engrosses the mind on single pursuits, and abstracts it from general objects and observation. One part are engaged in the pursuit of fashion, another of ambition, the most of riches ; all are so devoted to the world and mammon, that there is no time for the every-day duties of life and personal attentions and sympathies.

Even those who devote themselves to society and a large acquaintance, are distracted by this very pursuit, and indisposed from real attachments and friendships. And least of all can the other classes of society, and the protection which is their due, obtain any thought or adequate attention.<sup>i</sup>

#### SHIPWRECK.

Shipwreck is one of those common casualties to which all persons are subject, each in their own trade,—as, falls from scaffolds, fires in manufactories, accidents from machinery. Shipwreck, however, is one of the

<sup>i</sup> Reports of Mendicity Society, 1819, c. 1726, girl came from Ireland, hearing that wages were better in London, compelled to beg, of good character; 1822, c. 13,745, girl from Dublin, penniless, taken to his home by a watchman; c. 13,749, a joiner from Scotland, compelled to beg; c. 14,813, boy 14, from Worcester, expected to find his uncle, not knowing London to be so large, forced to beg; 1825, c. 19,703, lad 17, brought his sister with him, aged 13, from Ireland, walked from Liverpool to London, had 9*d.* left when they arrived.

most frequent calamities, in consequence of the extended commerce of this country, and especially the coasting trade. I mention it more particularly, because it is one of the pretences frequently set up by beggars, to shew that this misfortune really has existence, and that its reality is not disproved by the frequency of these pretences.<sup>j</sup>

#### WANT OF SETTLEMENT.

The views which are held respecting the poor are brutal. These views are in a measure enforced by the law, and arise out of it; but the law represents the public opinion which occasioned the enactment. By law and general opinion the poor are a nuisance. All beggars are criminals. Because the law has provided a resource to the indigent (how far an adequate one will be noticed presently), therefore every one who presents himself in the way of a rich man to ask alms is a cri-

<sup>j</sup> Mendicity Society Reports, 1819, c. 1935; 1823, c. 15,164; 1833, p. 49.

minal. No matter how real his distress, no matter how inadequate the legal provision in his case, no matter how peculiar his circumstances—all beggars are impostors. The truth of the tale he tells is no criterion. Because the law of man has said there shall be no poverty, thereby endeavouring to defeat the law of God,—therefore, whether a man be living in health, and idleness, and comfort, and simulate illness, want of work and money, or whether he be sinking under illness, accident, want of work, and inevitable ruin, he is equally an impostor, if he begs—equally criminal, and subject to punishment. A man is sent to prison for truly representing his real poverty. Thus truth and falsehood are confounded by law and general estimation. Whether a man be blind, have no arms, or legs, it is all one and the same thing; because he begs, he is, in the language of all officials, and of more than half the richer public, a gross impostor. The effect of this upon people's hearts and minds—upon their sense of right and wrong, of

truth and falsehood, is positively destructive.

But it goes further. Not only is the blind man or the cripple a rogue because he has a refuge and a legal resort in his parish, wherever it may be, whether a hundred miles off or twenty; but all those who happen to have no settlement at all are clubbed together with them in the general estimation, and are equally characterised with the rest as vagrants, vagabonds, rogues, and impostors, without regard to the distinction in their case, and the absence even of the usual resources. Vast multitudes of Irish and Scotch, and many foreigners, are constantly in this case, being wholly without resource in parish relief, though in the greatest distress, from any of the above causes; yet they meet with no greater measure of compassion or relief, but rather with less of both. It is a common phrase and conclusion that the case of the Irish is desperate—that it is hopeless to attempt to assist them. They are almost generally abandoned. Some few



exceptions are made ; and they greatly assist one another ; and they are driven by this absence of all resource to much greater economy and exertions ; and thus they do in fact continue to exist, through extraordinary toil, and shifts, and perseverance, and power to bear privations, and to subsist on the lowest food, and by their natural buoyancy. The one answer of the overseers is, “ we will pass you to Ireland ;”<sup>k</sup>—that is, to a poorer country, a still greater destitution, and an absence from all those among whom you may have established a character which might ensure you employment when the season of occupation shall come round. The consequence is, that the refusal to be passed is

<sup>k</sup> The following is the regulation of the Mendicity Society with respect to Irish recently arrived in London : “ That this class of applicants should be disposed of at once, receiving at the utmost food and a single night’s lodging, unless in cases of very peculiar emergency, which should be referred to the committee, who may afford relief not exceeding 10s.”—*Mendicity Society’s Report*, 1833, p. 19.

almost as constant as the offer of it; and the Irish therefore, and other unsettled poor, go on of necessity upon their own resources, without any dependence upon the legal provision which is to others the last resort of misery. This state of things falls heaviest upon those Irish and Scotch who have left their own country a great many years, have lost all their connexions with it, and have lived and grown old in this country in toil and service. It is better with them to be destitute in England, than to be both destitute and strangers in their own country.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mendicity Society Reports, 1820, c. 4658, a native of the East Indies, paid off in England—applied to a magistrate, who told him he could do nothing for him but send him to prison, to which he consented; 1827, c. 21,780, left Ireland long ago; 1829, c. 22,963, Irish, a good workman, ill in bed for several weeks; 1839, c. 37,205.

An aged Irishman, named Harvey, was passed to Ireland from St. Giles's, being too old to work, and returned because he found no friends or support for him there. He asserted his right to beg, and lived by going from house to house, and interesting many people in

## DIFFICULTY OF OBTAINING PARISH RELIEF.

But it is not true that parish relief is in all cases a resource, even to those who have a settlement. In multitudes of cases it is no resource at all; for the relief which is offered, when it is not absolutely refused, is often such relief as cannot be accepted, and practically puts the applicants in the same situation as the Irish and others before mentioned.

The main object of the guardians and overseers is not to administer the law equally and impartially between the rich and poor, as if the poor had been parties to the making of it. The law was passed by the rich for themselves, and it is administered for them-  
his case. God had placed him in this lot, and the law had not raised him out of it; and he was not ashamed of it. He had seen better days, and he did not feel degraded by his vocation. He kept a good Sunday coat, was constant at the early sacrament at St. Giles's, and might frequently be seen, till lately, kneeling beside the Lord Chief Justice; their two white heads presenting together a very interesting object.

selves and by themselves ; and the usual and almost exclusive test of the goodness of the administration is the decrease of the sum expended—that is, of the amount received by the poor to aid them in their distresses. The system of the administration of relief is a defensive system ; the main contest is, to find means and excuses for refusing relief, without infringing the obligations of the law. Some cases of real and obvious distress are relieved liberally ; and there is an abstract intention, perhaps, of doing justly in the mind of the officer, upon his first entrance into office. But the poor have the law as their only weapon ; and they are not skilful in the use of it. The officer has both a greater skill and experience in the law, and also the purse ; and this last gives him the entire superiority. Then, again, the officer has those over him whose purse it is, and who are concerned in the economy of it, and who do not with their own eyes witness the distress. But, more than all, the poor are the advancing party, and upon the offensive,

and naturally making the most of their own case. The relieving officer is always upon his defence; and his mind and skill are constantly engaged in sifting the truth, discovering the false, and narrowing down and diminishing the case presented to him as much as possible. His ingenuity becomes too active and overstrained; a habit of suspicion is engendered; and it becomes a practice to visit all their effects upon every case and statement. This state of mind, once engendered, warrants all other expedients which can be brought in aid of it; and every advantage which the letter of the law can afford is used as a fit instrument to defeat the claims for parish relief. Thus, the workhouse is offered to one who it is known will refuse it; a pass to another who is determined against removing; bread is offered to a third who wants a few shillings to redeem his tools. Thus each person is offered that which he will refuse; and the rates are economised, and the claims of the poor are thwarted, at all events. This practice hav-

ing become general, and been long exercised, the spirit of it has extended beyond the officials themselves to those above them and around them ; and it has become a conventional rule of right, a habit of thought and axiom, that the poor are continually exercising all kinds of false pretences and claims to relief ; that they are generally a set of cheats and vagabonds, and are to be curtailed as much as possible. The very opposite disposition of certain charitable people — and there are more of this disposition than of the contrary who will read this statement — are no answer to this exposition, and will not disprove the general existence of the feelings here described. Whatever may be the prevailing sentiments upon this subject, what has been above mentioned, and the cases referred to below, afford fair specimens of the practical working of this principle in the hands of the officials to whom the relief is entrusted.<sup>m</sup>

<sup>m</sup> Mendicity Society Reports, 1819, c. 242, 327, 3056, woman with two children sent off to London



## INSUFFICIENCY OF PARISH ALLOWANCE.

One of the means of defence used by the parish officers is to grant relief, but so utterly insufficient for the necessities of the case, that it is in effect no relief at all. A rough word or a threat is administered together with the relief, and a wholesome terror is inspired; so that the person receiving it is apprehensive that if she venture a further

in a wagon sixteen days after being brought to bed, found in the streets in the middle of the night in December, being many miles from her husband's parish; 1820, c. 5012, a wholesale hatter, had a recommendation from sixty-seven most respectable inhabitants of the city—the workhouse offered; 1821, c. 9485; 1822, c. 13,767, 13,786, girl, 17, slept three nights in a watchhouse—refused by overseer because not regularly passed; 1821, c. 7363, husband dying, offered to be passed to Ireland; 1820, c. 3380, a brazier, wife and six children—answer of overseer, that he must first sell his tools; 4970, deserted by husband—refused because her husband not with her. I have selected cases which happened long since, on account of the odiousness of the subject.



application, the allowance already granted will be stopped. Whatever, therefore, her distress, and however much it may have been increased, she will never face the parish officers again, and risk the loss of the present pittance.

The most difficult and distressing cases entertained by the Mendicity Society are those of persons having London parishes. Their rule is to give them only a meal and clothing, if they are receiving any thing from the parish. But these cases in general exhibit circumstances of greater urgency than any others.

This topic is a branch only of the last division; but it is of so specific a character as to require a distinct and separate notice.<sup>n</sup>

<sup>n</sup> Mendicity Society Reports, 1820, c. 3954, wife and four children, husband paralytic—allowance, three shillings per week; 1822, c. 13,785; 1833, c. 27,316, waiter at taverns, three shillings per week, and this discontinued—forced to beg.

## VICIOUS AND WEAK CHARACTER.

We come to a very different class among the causes of distress, and one which is confessedly but too frequent. Defect in moral character is a very prevailing cause of poverty. The treatment of such cases is another head of inquiry; at present we are dealing with the existence of distress, its causes, and frequency. But it ought to be noticed, that there is a great disposition to exaggerate upon this head; and in a matter of such nicety as the discrimination of the claims and merits of the poor, even a slight bias towards any one particular view must have a vast influence, and may lead the judgment very far astray out of the proper course. It has already been observed, that drunkenness is caused by poverty, as well as being the cause of it. Other faults of character are similarly circumstanced. It is a modern theory, that poverty is the chief cause of crime. But this is only a theory. The same has been said of want of education, with an

equal degree of truth. In each case, as is usual, there is a partial truth, and a monstrous exaggeration. But poverty does nurse crime, and cause those seeds of vice to spring up which are near the surface.

Also, weakness of mind is more closely allied to weakness of character than is generally acknowledged; and no one cause of poverty whatsoever is more pitiable. I have not entered into this cause of distress as a class, because it is incurable, like loss of limbs or blindness. But it ought to be kept in mind, that this cause peoples a vast field of misery. Infirmary of body and mind, natural inferiority and weakness, places great numbers in a state of difficulty from their birth; and from the competition which now exists, and is daily increasing, and the accuracy with which every man's worth is being weighed, the difficulty is also daily increasing of procuring a maintenance, to those whom the providence of God has placed lower in the scale of ability and strength among their fellow-creatures. But as infe-

riority of mind is less obvious than bodily infirmity, and blends intimately with moral weakness, it requires greater attention and discrimination, and a closer observation is necessary to distinguish it. In a question of so much nicety and doubt, the judgment is sure to be pronounced according to the previous bias.

Every one conversant with the poor will have found, that there is a large number of persons who are continually going down. They seem to be born to misery. They meet with more misfortunes, make less advantage of their successes, and of the assistance which they must meet with, than other people. Every thing goes wrong with them. And each time you meet with them, after every interval, however much more than usual may have been the help afforded them, still they are constantly going down; and each time they are found to be at a lower stage of want and distress, till they come to abject misery. The distresses of some of these are caused by natural infirmity—of

others, by weakness of moral character—a great proportion by the two together. These are most difficult cases to deal with. But let not any one harshly conclude that they are all hopeless. They are generally so. But most unexpected and satisfactory cases do occasionally arise, in which the most hopeless are retrieved effectually, even after repeated failures and most fruitless endeavours; and this in the renovation of the moral condition, as well as in the pecuniary circumstances. These cases are not hopeless; and what is of great concern in our judgment and treatment of the poor, the largest experience cannot determine which of the many cases before it will lead to the most satisfactory results.

The cases referred to are instances in which vicious character was the prevailing cause of the distress.<sup>o</sup>

<sup>o</sup> Mendicity Society Reports, 1823, c. 16,641; 1833, c. 27,691; 1836, c. 31,087; 1826, c. 20,248; 1838, c. 33,101, 32,370; 1839, c. 34,098; 1826, c. 20,444, 24,885, and 54,276, Begging-letter department.

## SEDUCTION—PROSTITUTION.

Shall I hide from view the greatest of all griefs—the most acute and urgent miseries? Having begun to exhibit the distresses of human life, shall I forbear to portray them in their form of greatest depth and intensity, from an overstrained delicacy?

The misfortunes of life seem to fall heaviest upon the female sex. It is the widow, and the deserted wife, and the weak and friendless girl, who is many times oftener the subject of compassion than the other sex. Women are formed to suffer and to endure; and abundant is the suffering and the endurance to which, in all ages, they have constantly been subjected. And nobly they have endured. Some of the greatest examples of fortitude, and firmness, and cheerful endurance of pain, have been afforded by women.

Women are also born to be a prey. A mixture of strength and weakness, they are impregnable on one side,—having the other



sex for their leader and support; on the other side, they are defenceless and powerless—against the sex upon which they are destined to lean and to depend.

The misery connected with this subject is appalling; its features are hideous. My topic is compassion, not censure; to advocate the cause of suffering, and persuade to its relief, not to condemn or to do away with the causes of it. Perhaps, however, the exhibition of the real picture in its true colours may have some effect in a case where the character and motives are more concerned than in the other departments of misery. Some one, perhaps, may pause in a path of which hitherto he has known nothing of the end. Especially, it may induce some mistresses of families, who are thoughtless in bringing young women to London, and hasty in discharging them without protection, to consider their responsibility, and the amount of crime and misery which their care or inadvertence may prevent or originate. But the whole subject is an awful



and a mysterious one. All the ways of evil are mysterious, but this is most inscrutable. “ Three things are too wonderful for me, yea, there are four which I know not: the way of an eagle in the air; the way of a serpent upon a rock; the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; and the way of a man with a maid.” Money enticeth, wine is raging, but love is a furnace seven times heated; and it consumeth all things when extended beyond bounds. The fire is healthful, and safe, and manageable, so long as it burns only on the domestic hearth; but when once it has transgressed beyond those bounds, it is a destroyer and devourer, and cannot be arrested; or, if at all, only by a very violent effort, and after great, and terrible, and irrecoverable damage, or ruin. The miseries attendant upon seduction and prostitution are awful and appalling. Disease, starvation, robbery, insanity, early and painful death, murder of children, suicide:—these are among the consequences most frequently to be met

with ; and the almost certain forerunner of these is the most abject poverty.

There is some hope of a *man* when he falls into the most vicious courses, that some circumstances may retrieve him,—that some efforts of his own, or strong inducements, may enable him to take one step back, and then another, towards recovery. But what power on earth can bring back and recover a *woman* when she is vicious ? A man's worth is in his strength ; and this remains to him after the loss of character. A woman's worth is in her purity ; and when this is gone, who is there to be found who will afford her encouragement or help ? And she has no strength or foundation in herself, upon which she can make even a first effort. The women here described are outcasts,—the scorned and rejected of society ; beyond the lowest profligate among men,—the common thief, the common beggar, the habitual gin-drinker. Their career is mostly of from three to five months ; after which they sink

by rapid and resistless falls to ruin, misery, beggary, disease, and death at length, among all the horrors of moral and physical destitution.

The ultimate stages of distress in this, as in other classes, can hardly be shewn by examples; because, whenever extreme cases have become known, they have been partly at least arrested by public or private charity. Nevertheless, the following is the experience of the Mendicity Society upon this subject, as expressed in one of their reports:—"Of all the distressing objects that present themselves to this society for relief and assistance, either to rescue them from the miseries into which they have fallen by unavoidable poverty, or early habits of vice (the mind being not yet wholly contaminated), perhaps there are none which deserve that attention, and act more forcibly upon the feelings of the benevolent, than those unfortunate girls, who, seduced by a false idea of bettering their situations by leaving their friends and coming to London, or abandoned,

perhaps, by their natural protectors, thus follow the dreadful path which is pointed out to them by the older sinner, and which custom rendering habitual, they sink at length into an early grave, condemned, rejected, and scorned.”<sup>q</sup>

Seduction does not invariably lead to all the miseries and consequences here described; though it does so in most cases. It has some distinguishing features which separate it from the other class of objects, whose ranks are filled up by those miserable creatures who have been driven to that course by want, or have adopted it of choice, or have been brought up from infancy among the lowest, most abandoned, and most profligate of the human race, and have never even heard of the impropriety of such courses.

The examples referred to below will afford specimens of each of these classes. But it must be considered, that there are infinite varieties of feature and circumstances in these, as in other cases; and that these

<sup>q</sup> Mendicity Society, Report 1823, p. 40.

divisions can only exhibit the prominent points and characteristics of misfortune, and not pretend to accurate and perfect classification.<sup>r</sup>

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I do not offer the present as a complete picture of the poverty and misery which exist; or as a true picture. Nor do I conceive that it will produce a just impression

<sup>r</sup> Mendicity Society Reports. *Seduction*. 1838, c. 32,686, attempted suicide; 1824, c. 17,183; and 1825, p. 35, driven to prostitution, and hunger—restored to respectability through the Magdalen—a very pitiable case, from circumstances of distress which charity could hardly have averted; 1820, c. 3458, reduced to beggary; c. 5222, subsisted some days on potatoe-parings, while suckling a child; 1824, c. 18,031, forced to marry by the parish—husband transported; 1836, c. 30,746, girl, 18, seduced under promise of marriage by a person in the same rank, and deserted in London, in ill health. *Prostitution*. 1839, c. 34,137; 1823, c. 14,870, girl, 17, only a fortnight in London—came for a situation; c. 16,672, girl, 16, turned out by her stepmother; 1822, c. 14,241; c. 14,136, maid-servant out of place; c. 13,944; 1831, c. 24,810, reduced to starvation, restored through the Refuge for the Destitute.

upon the minds of any great number of persons. But I believe it to be sufficient, and adequate to the purpose, and likely to produce a proper effect upon a greater number of persons, than any other description or partial selection of cases would be calculated to produce.

The features of poverty are infinitely varied in character and magnitude. No two cases exactly resemble one another. The gradations are innumerable. And in order to exhibit a perfectly true picture, it would be necessary to exemplify all these gradations, and the various shades of colour and intensity in this wide landscape of human misery. Even then the representation would be imperfect and unreal. For the changes and chances of life being infinite in themselves—much more in their combinations—and the accidents and reverses correspondingly numerous, no adequate acquaintance with them can be formed except from experience. Human life in general, and each of its departments, is to be best learned by



practice, and not by books and descriptions.

The cases referred to are, for the most part, urgent cases. I have made choice of these, both because it is requisite that men's minds should be impressed more strongly than they are with the actual extent of misery; and because they truly exhibit the depths to which a great proportion of the lighter and less urgent cases must fall, if not arrested in their downward course, and lifted up by charity.

I am unwilling, too, that it should be supposed that all cases of real distress exhibit this intensity; for such a belief would defeat my own object. If such examples were to be looked upon as picturing every scene of distress, people might suppose that, unless a case exactly resembled some one of these portraits, it had no real claim to sympathy or credit; and that no case was entitled to relief, unless it presented the same prominence of feature and intensity. But this is



by no means the fact. All misery is entitled to consolation and relief, as will be shewn hereafter. And it is obvious that many of the cases referred to and noticed, must have gone through many degrees and stages before they came to this last, and might have been stayed and supported by timely charity ; and that multitudes are in fact arrested by Providence in their downward career, and saved from utter ruin, or reinstated, as these might have been.

These descriptions are imperfect in another respect, from exhibiting poverty in too simple forms, and thus isolating the causes under particular heads, as if each case might really be characterised and classed under one or other of these divisions. In this respect they do not convey a sufficiently strong impression of the real intensity of misery. These causes rarely exist alone ; on the contrary, those who are unfortunate are, for the most part, subject to a multiplicity of misfortunes : some to more wonderful accumu-

lations and repetitions of accidents and reverses, than could be believed to be mixed together in the vials of God's providence.

This is an answer to those who say, that people ought to provide for themselves against contingencies. A man in good work might provide against a six-weeks' illness; or against a six-weeks' loss of work; against the consequences of his own misconduct; or a moderate length of old age. But what foresight can be expected to provide against the combination of all these, and the indefinite extent of them? against loss of work—loss of clothes and tools—number of children—desertion by husband—want of a settlement—natural want of ability and strength—repeated and continued illness? For all these may be accumulated upon one family. Grant any particular number and combination of distresses as the utmost that a man might fairly be expected to provide against, and I would shew it exceeded in extent and degree in numerous instances.

Thomas Mealis failed in the silk-trade at

Wigan; then became a hawker, in which he failed also. He had five children, and no settlement in London, where he supported himself and family by selling fruit in the streets. He, his wife, and two of the children, were attacked with typhus fever, which lasted many weeks. The next year the husband lost the use of his limbs. Soon after, he died.<sup>s</sup>

Ann Baldwin, who sweeps a crossing in Bedford Place, has no settlement in England. One son is a complete cripple, and almost an idiot. She is old and ill herself; and has no resource for herself and two children, one of them the cripple, but her crossing. She has had eleven children. A daughter in place at Acton was brought home to her one day in a fever, and helpless state; and she has not yet recovered, so as to be fit for service again; and it is likely never will do so. While under these difficulties, another daughter was run over, and taken to the hospital; whose husband had de-

<sup>s</sup> Mendicity Society, Report 1828, c. 22,256.

served her; and her two children were thrown upon the grandmother, Ann Baldwin, for support.

The crippled and maimed, the infirm in mind and senses, have not been placed or exemplified as distinct classes, it being already obvious that such persons cannot support themselves, and must starve unless upheld by some external provision; and the only question being, the source from whence this provision should be drawn. Their case will come under discussion among the rest, when considering the duties which arise as consequent upon the real condition of the poor, and our relation to them. This relation cannot be properly understood without first having a more adequate knowledge of their real character and merits than most of us have at present; for in general our opinion of them is both harsh and deficient. I shall endeavour now to exhibit a somewhat more favourable picture, and more pleasing features of their character, than have generally been noticed and insisted upon. Hav-

ing done this, I shall have furnished the means of appreciating them sufficiently; for enough has been written of late years of charges against them, to possess the public mind fully with all the unamiable features, and to enable every one to supply for himself the other side of the picture.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### *The Character of the Poor.*

VIRTUES OF THE POOR — CONTENTMENT — RELIGION  
— MUTUAL KINDNESS AND CHARITY — LIBERALITY  
— HONESTY — FAITH — SELF-DENIAL — HEROISM.

SECT. II. IMPOSTORS — SIGNS OF IMPOSTURE — FRE-  
QUENCY OF IMPOSTURES EXAGGERATED.

THE poor are not brutes ; indeed they are not. They are not positively brutish. They are not insensible to pain ; they are not insensible to pleasure. They are not insensible to unkindness ; they are not incapable of feeling and shewing kindness. They are not incapable of gratitude. They are not incapable of conjugal love and fidelity. The conjugal fidelity of the lower orders is interrupted by fewer breaches than among the highest classes, in spite of the weaker guards and more difficult remedies that they are provided with. The conjugal fidelity of the lowest Irish is proverbial.

The poor are not incapable of religious

feeling and attainment. During the late disastrous season, in the autumn of 1839, in a distant western county, when there was no hope of seed-sowing, the little farmers without capital, whose existence seemed to depend upon it, were cheerful and contented; and this was uniformly more the case in proportion to their poverty. If there came a deluge of rain, they said, "God's will be done." If there came a fine day, they said, "God sent it." And all their conduct and conversation was so resigned and buoyant, as to shame both landlords and merchants, and other rich men, who at the same period were suffering a comparatively small diminution of their prosperity, from the difficulties of the times and the dearness of provisions.

The poor-house congregation in St. Giles's exhibits a more exemplary pattern of earnest and united congregational devotion than any thing that is to be met with in most churches. The chaplain to the workhouse says, that he meets with more exem-



plary piety among the paupers there than among any other class of people ; and one woman in particular, who has seen a better station, has the greatest religious contentment of any person that he knows. She does not even pray God to release her from her troubles ; but is thankful and contented with every thing. The rector of one of the largest parishes in London says, in like manner, that the two most really religious persons that he knows are paupers in his parish. Their conversation is an instructive lesson to any body. The incumbent of a parish near Lewes is in the habit of visiting a poor young woman, a pauper, who is almost worn out with ill health. He says that he never comes away, after having been in her company, without feeling himself deeply impressed and being highly instructed. Her resignation under severe suffering is so entire, and her heavenly mindedness so perfect, that she is a lesson to the most earnest and devoted and self-denying Christian.

The poor are capable of affection, of con-

jugal and filial love, of forethought, of perseverance. The annual emigration of the Irish, and the resolution with which they save and carry home their earnings of a few weeks' labour,—living at the same time almost upon nothing, and journeying for six weeks perhaps without doing a single stroke of work, while any other man is almost beggared if he loses only a week's employment,—this is one of the most extraordinary examples of forethought and perseverance that any national practice can exhibit.<sup>a</sup>

The poor are capable of much self-denial, and disinterested kindness. Hannah Musgrave, a poor woman with six children, who was herself constantly requiring assistance and gifts of clothing, went about among those persons who were in the habit of relieving her, begging clothes with the utmost earnestness for a neighbour, who was to lose

<sup>a</sup> See the House of Commons Report on the State of the Irish Poor in Great Britain, pp. 46, 47; where an account is given of similar migrations of labourers in different parts of Europe.

his place, if he did not clothe himself better. The persons applied to supposed that she was begging for herself, till they inquired into the circumstances ; and she succeeded in re-establishing her poorer neighbour.

Above all, the poor are capable of charity. The alms which they give are greater in amount, and are a perfect shame to their richer neighbours. The poor could not live without the assistance which they render one another. I do not talk merely of proportion, but the actual money given by the poor to one another is probably greater in amount than that which is bestowed by the rich in all their charities. It is said that the Bible Society receives more from the pennies of the poor than the pounds of the rich. The income of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel was 10,000*l.* at a time when that of the Church Missionary Society was 75,000*l.*,—15,000*l.* of which was from the pennies of the poor man ; and that of the Wesleyans was 100,000*l.* In Ticehurst, the Wesleyans proposed to enlarge their

chapel. The subscriptions were so liberal, that they built a new chapel and a school-house ; some of the farmers subscribing 20*l*. The poor constantly give to each other when they are in distress. They pawn their goods for one another. It is a common thing for them to go and borrow an article to pawn from another poor neighbour, to get food or firing for themselves. Michael Slater, a poor Irish labourer, pawned his coat for a neighbour whose goods were likely to be seized for rent.

They frequently share their last morsel and cup of tea with one more forlorn and destitute than themselves, having not even a morsel. The example of the widow's mite, and of the cruise of oil of the widow of Sarepta, is often repeated, and is by no means a rare occurrence in this metropolis.

The poor take each other into their rooms when they are without lodging, with less than a bare chance of ever being remunerated. The same man, Michael Slater, above mentioned, took in a young Irish woman.

who had no place or home. His wife got her a place; and then gave her the pawn-ticket of one of her own gowns, in order that she might get herself some clothing, if she should succeed in redeeming it.

The poor almost invariably repay loans that have been guaranteed by their poor neighbours, and feel it as high an obligation as any wealthy British merchant.

That the poor are free-givers is evidenced by street-singers and musicians, and other beggars, frequenting the narrow streets and alleys, which shews that they obtain a livelihood there; and those who frequent the better streets are full as much supported by the gifts of servants and the smaller tradespeople as by the wealthier inhabitants.<sup>b</sup> A great proportion of the number of maid-

<sup>b</sup> In the Constabulary Force Report, 1839, occurs the following evidence, at p. 69: "The chief inducement to vagrancy in the town, is the relief given by mistaken but benevolent individuals, *more particularly by the poorer classes.*"

servants in London send two and three guineas out of their wages annually to their relations in the country.

Indeed, it would be endless to ascertain and rehearse the different modes and forms in which the poor bestow assistance and support upon one another; they are as numerous as their vicissitudes and circumstances. In sickness, they bestow attention and comfort almost beyond what money can purchase.

The following additional examples, collected within a very small circle of observation, and all very recent cases, will afford some further illustration of what is here advanced. General assertion and description furnishes no proof, further than it brings to mind such examples and confirmations as each reader may himself have witnessed; and particular anecdotes and instances cannot easily be remembered with a sufficiently faithful detail, till they are begun to be collected for the express purpose and object in



hand. The following instances have all been ascertained within a very short period of time.

Elizabeth Galloway had been servant-maid in respectable families. She married, and kept a small oil and colour shop; and after many years became unfortunate in business. Her things were sold under an execution, and even her bed under her was not left. Her neighbours, in similar station with herself, came forward to assist her. One gave her money; another bought her most necessary furniture at the auction, and gave it back to her; others assisted her in different ways, and so kept her head above water. All this was done before her circumstances became known to those families with whom she had been in service, and who were able more effectually to assist her.

M. Tierney, who made combs, and sold them in the streets, was in great distress. He had no means to purchase materials for his trade, and little sale for what he had made. A fellow-workman, who carried a



basket like himself, came to see him. As soon as he found the distress he was in, he sent out for beer, and ordered in some supper. On going away he gave him half-a-crown.

A putrid fever was raging at Wadhurst, Sussex, in the winter of 1838-9. In one house of a very poor and destitute family, all the members of it were either sick or dead; and people being afraid to enter the house, they were entirely deserted. A poor woman, but less poor than this neglected family, went into the house of her own accord. She found the woman lying sick upon the bed; her daughter lying dead by her side upon the same bed, in a dreadfully putrid state. She laid out the daughter's body, having no place to lay it on but the floor; and having performed to it all the offices required, she then attended to the rest of the family.

J. S., aged seventy-six, was a sadler in Tottenham Court Road, but failed in business, and is now reduced to the utmost state of destitution. He is diseased, ruptured,

and paralytic. The whole desire and thought of his mind is to provide for his wife after his own death. This is his one ruling object; and though reduced to this very abject state, he for a long while refused the offers of parish-relief, and the earnest solicitations of his friends to accept it, because it would disentitle his wife to the benefit of certain charities after his death. This poor man, finding that he was bringing greater present miseries upon his wife than those which he designed to avert, has at length been compelled to accept the parish-relief.

A woman named Rawlins came away from service, in order that she might support and take care of her father. He is totally blind, and she provides for him entirely. She took a cellar in Monmouth Street, where she mends and restores women's and children's shoes, and sells them to the shops. Her age is twenty-five; and she is perfectly cheerful and contented.

A widow woman named Reredon, aged sixty, came over from Ireland to see her

daughter, who was in place ; but her daughter having lost her place, they are both living together in great misery. A lady, upon going out of town for four months, engaged to pay a shilling a week to this poor woman to go and visit another bedridden woman once a day, and see that she was not absolutely deserted. She gave her no other charge or duty.

When this lady returned to town, she found that the widow Reredon had volunteered all the time to wash for the bedridden woman, to cook for her, and to do all other necessary things, and even to sleep with her when wanted. She went to the parish for her allowance ; to the lady's house for the weekly relief which she had left for her ; and proved faithful, though she might have deprived her of every thing ; for the poor patient was so silly that she did not know whether she was possessed of sixpence. So great an affection had she conceived for her charge, that she used to divide her victuals with her, rather than see her want. Her

sister said of her, that she would always rather go without food herself than see the woman want whom she was nursing. For all this service she asked no additional remuneration. Indeed, she never asked for any thing for herself; but used often to go about and ask for a sheet, or old linen, or other such thing, for the bedridden woman.

A woman named Ann Down was deserted by her husband at Cheltenham, where an order was given for her admission into the workhouse. But hearing that the parish-officers were in search of her husband, to punish him for deserting his family, she absconded, and came to London in search of him, with her three children, hoping to prevent his being imprisoned on her account.<sup>c</sup>

A gentleman, now living in Alfred Street, gave to a beggar in Pall Mall some silver wrapped up in a paper, instead of halfpence. The beggar ran after him, and shewing it, said, "Sir, I am sure you did not intend this for me."

<sup>c</sup> Mendicity Society, Report 1835, p. 34.

The present incumbent of Hawkhurst, in Kent, when he first came to live there last year, visited a poor woman, and gave her half-a-crown. When he called on her a week after, she said, “ I think, sir, you did not know, when you gave me the half-crown, that my husband belonged to a club. So I have kept the half-crown, and here it is.”

“ S. A., driven by distress to prostitution, supported her little brother, eight years of age, by the wages of her infamy.”<sup>d</sup>

It is a great mistake, and want of charity, to suppose that this last class of miserables are all destitute of good feelings, and are utterly depraved. There are very many of them who are conscious of their misery, and grieve at it poignantly. The name they give themselves is, “unfortunate girls.” Even those whose weakness of resolution disables them from quitting their vicious course and companions, lament this weakness:—and what loss of limb, health, or of strength, or

<sup>d</sup> Mendicity Society, Report 1831, c. 25,107.

what feebleness of intellect, is so pitiable and irremediable as weakness and loss of character? Thanks be to God, none of these defects are absolutely irremediable. But in proportion to the difficulty of remedy must be the misery; and in proportion to the misery must be the desire and endeavour to give relief, in every well-constituted and truly Christian mind. This wretched class of young women ought not to be abandoned, as if their case were altogether hopeless to Christian perseverance. They are capable of hope; they are sensible of their misery and their weakness; they are capable of gratitude and affection. The greater proportion of the cases of this description, relieved by the Mendicity Society and other charities, have exhibited the highest pitch of penitence and gratitude.

The above instances, which are drawn from a very narrow circle of observation, and are most of them very recent cases, do not present an exaggerated picture of the better feelings and dispositions of the poor.

The enumeration of their virtues might be much more widely extended.

An exact counterpart of my own experience of the characteristic virtues of the poorer classes, is furnished in a very recent publication, by Mr. Kenrick, giving an account of the population of Pontypool, in Monmouthshire.<sup>e</sup> He gives the following description of the moral character of the working people.

“ If I sought for some of the highest qualities of the Christian character, I should find them in the family-circle of this class, (the miners and iron-workers). Among persons who seem more immediately to depend upon Providence for their daily bread, there grows up a stronger faith that those

<sup>e</sup> The Population of Pontypool, &c., situated in the so-called disturbed districts : its moral, social, and intellectual character ; a Lecture, &c. By G. S. Kenrick, Esq. (pp. 25, 26.)

I am particularly glad of this additional testimony, because my own experience has not extended to manufacturing and mining districts.



wants will be supplied, than among those who rely upon the abundance of their possessions, and the multitude of their dependents; who, never knowing what it is to fear want, are tempted from that very circumstance to forget their dependence upon the great First Cause, who permits their table to groan with luxuries, while the operative eats his simple meal with a grateful heart. I have known many instances of honesty among this class. The other day a workman found that in a long account he had been overpaid seven pounds, and he brought back the money. On a former occasion, a man who was paid a five-pound note too much, brought back the money, saying, ‘It is not mine,—I should have no comfort in making use of it;’ and at another time, a man received a ten-pound packet of half-crowns in mistake, instead of five shillings’ worth of copper, and he returned the money immediately, though it is improbable that, in paying away three thou-

sand pounds, I should ever have discovered where the mistake had been made.

“ In times of difficulty and emergency I have received the most devoted and unflinching services from this class, at the risk of danger and difficulty to themselves. I have known these men practise the greatest self-denial, and acknowledge their duty of assisting their fellow-workmen, and readily perform it. A regular attendant at chapel, and a steady man, was asked to join the Temperance Society; he replied, ‘ I am a sober man, and do not require such a safeguard.’ But it was said, ‘ You may have influence with others who are drunken, and who will follow your example.’ He admitted the force of the plea, and joined immediately. Four other persons to whom the same party used similar arguments likewise joined this society, entirely with the hope of benefiting their fellow-workmen. Now, whatever we may think of the merits or demerits of the Temperance Society, it was a noble act of

self-denial in these persons to join it from that motive, and a ready obedience to the law of charity, which we must all admire, if we do not imitate it.

“There is a great deal of kindness among workmen to one another in sickness and suffering. A woman will sit for nights by a neighbour’s bedside to attend upon her, and perform her own household duties in the day. A woman will take the child of another who is badly off, and bring it up as her own, in many cases where she herself is burdened with a family of five or six children; yet this forlorn one shares the meals, the shelter, and kindness of this family, as if she belonged to it. When a lodger has fallen ill, far from home and friends, he has been attended, nursed, and fed, with the greatest care and solicitude, though there was small hope of recovery or repayment. I call to mind the exemplary conduct of the wife of a mechanic to a girl who was attacked by the small-pox in its most virulent form, directly after she came to the house as a ser-

vant. This good Samaritan did not send her home when she found the poor girl was likely to be a burden instead of an assistant to her ; but she watched over that sufferer for hours and days, and changed her dressings, when the ravages of disease had made her body as black as a coal, and it seemed dangerous to breathe the infectious air of the room. When all hope appeared vain, she still continued to watch by the bedside of her patient ; and she was rewarded by the restoration to perfect health of the poor girl.

“ Is a person sick, and his mind ill at ease ? In the absence of the minister, an elder of his chapel, or a neighbour, will come to pray by his bedside, and offer him the consolations of religion. Has a person met with an accident by burning his foot in the melted iron or cinder at the furnaces ? His fellow-workmen will make a subscription of two, three, or even five pounds, for his support during illness. A short time ago a boy about eleven years of age lost his leg by a fall of coal ; and the colliers and others on

the Varteg have subscribed forty pounds to put him apprentice to a trade, and to buy him a few articles to begin business with.

“ If, therefore, you would wish to see some of the highest virtues of the Christian character exemplified, do not enter into princes’ palaces, but seek admittance to the lowly cottage of the industrious collier or artisan. There you will see simplicity, self-respect, intelligence, a willingness to oblige, with generosity, contentment, and a reliance upon Providence.”

At the time of the severe distress in Spitalfields in 1816, an examination took place ; and it was found, that in the schools of Spitalfields and its neighbourhood there were more than 70 orphans, who, upon the death of their parents, had been taken into their houses by the poor, and had been supported by them.<sup>d</sup>

In Mr. Buxton’s work on prisons a striking example is given. In the prison

<sup>d</sup> Dr. Chalmers’ Works, — Christian Polity of a Nation, vol. xvi. p. 377.

in Bristol the criminals had a very scanty allowance, and the debtors none at all, but were wholly dependent upon their relations and casual charity. It happened that both these resources failed to the debtors; but no instance of starvation occurred amongst them, because the criminals, compassionating their destitution, shared their own insufficient allowances with them.<sup>e</sup>

There is a spirit frequently to be found among the poor which amounts to heroism. I should not have ventured this assertion upon my own authority. The question was proposed, by one who asserted it, to a party of three clergymen. They all admitted at once, that there was a resignation and patience among the poor under suffering, a self-sacrifice and generosity, a confidence and faith, in giving their last morsel, that Providence would supply it again to them, which in any other class, and upon other subjects, would be called heroism. One of them said, that the thing was so common

<sup>e</sup> Chalmers' Works, vol. xvi. p. 391.



and notorious among the poor, that one would hardly notice it.

And yet I shall have occasion to give a more admirable picture than this, and to shew that these features are still more prominent among the poor in other countries; and that they would doubtless prevail in this country in a greater degree and extent, but for the deadening operation of a poor-law and compulsory charity.

I have not thought it necessary to depict the faults and vices of the poor. Of course they have them, and in abundance. Enough, however, has been written upon this topic, during the present generation, to render all addition under this head absolutely unnecessary.

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## SECTION II.

### *Impostors.*

ONE of the chief topics upon which political economists and others who make war with the poor, delight to write, and



upon which domestic economists delight to dwell, is the frequency of frauds and impositions which are practised upon the charitable. A vast many are ready to follow after this palatable but unchristian philosophy. It is so clever and manly to detect impositions,—it is so ignoble to be cheated,—above all, it is so very economical, and makes a convenient amount of charity go so far, to give only to those who are proved to be starving without any fault or weakness of their own,—that many are eager to accept, and greedy to swallow down this philosophy of antichrist.

Before making remarks upon the subject of imposture, I will first enumerate some of its principal and most ordinary forms ; in order that I may shew myself not entirely ignorant of the subject, or of the extent of the difficulty which I have to grapple with, when I contend that we ought not to suffer our minds to be too deeply occupied, or our conduct to be too much influenced, by the knowledge of these frauds and practices. I

have been subjected to most of these practices, in their turn ; but I have resisted the conclusion, which we hear daily in the mouths of seemingly charitable people, “ Really there are so many professed beggars about, and I have been so frequently imposed upon, that I have come to a resolution to listen to no more applications.”

The following are some of the most common and successful forms of imposture in London and elsewhere.

1. Sometimes persons sit upon steps, holding a paper before them with these words upon it, “ half starved,” “ a poor mechanic,” and other such notices.

2. A woman sits or lies upon a step, exhausted and fainting, while her husband or companion watches over her in apparent distress and bewilderment ; as if they were travellers just arrived from the country, and the companion were quite shocked and in despair at the sudden and inextricable calamity which has come upon them.

3. Another woman says, she is going

back to her friends in the country, or is about to be passed,—that her place is taken in the wagon; but her clothes are in pawn, and she wants a few shillings to enable her to redeem them.

4. Others come for an order for a lying-in hospital; and while they are waiting in the passage or hall, pretend they are suddenly taken with a pain in the back. This is a frequent form of application to young married women.

5. Others having got an order for an hospital, or the Margate infirmary, make use of it to obtain a few shillings from a dozen different people, to enable them to get linen, or tea and sugar, to be used while in the hospital, or to fulfil the other requisites of such institutions.

6. Persons having a ticket for a bushel of coals upon the payment of sixpence, will beg sixpences from door to door, shewing the ticket, and pleading that they are penniless.

7. Some beggars living in comparative

comfort, will keep a miserable room without fire or furniture, to which they may direct any one who is so zealous as to visit them and examine into their distress.<sup>e</sup>

8. The next is an imposition of a most convincing character. The applicant obtains local information respecting your residence in the country. He learns all the names of your neighbours, your family, and servants. He has such an accurate and detailed knowledge of all your circumstances, that you cannot but feel convinced that the story he tells is a true one, that he really came from that country, that he was really the son or servant of some very respectable neighbour, and that he ought to be saved by a liberal contribution from the degradation of making his poverty known any farther.

9. Obtaining the same accurate information, a person assumes the name of some nobleman or gentleman of fortune, and pretends either that he is descended from some

<sup>e</sup> Such things are done ; but I never myself met with an instance, or heard it well substantiated.

distant branch, or that he is the illicit offspring of some deceased member of the family, hitherto kept concealed. This, of course, is a matter which must be hushed up; and vast sums are sometimes levied upon noblemen and others by these pretences, to save the honour of the family.

10. When a pressure and distress takes place in any particular trade, the professed beggars acquaint themselves with it, and adapt their pretences accordingly.

If the weavers are in distress in Spital-fields or at Manchester, the beggars assume the character of weavers, and carry a little model-loom to indicate their calling, and pull the strings, as if they were in the habit of working the machinery.

So would-be sailors go about with a ship.

11. If a dreadful storm has taken place, the number of shipwrecked mariners is immediately increased by the professed beggars, who refer their sufferings to this cause of distress. By an act of parliament, the magistrates on the coast are directed to

give certificates of shipwreck; and forged certificates of this kind are carried by those who beg in this character.

12. As the hay-season approaches, some beggars dress themselves in a smock frock, and pretend to have arrived too soon for the hay-making, and to be consequently destitute.

13. When a severe frost comes, they put a cabbage upon a pole, and become poor gardeners.

14. After the revolution in Poland, there were many who fictitiously assumed the character of Polish emigrants.

15. During the Spanish civil war, many assumed the uniform of the British Legion.

It was the same after the battle of Waterloo.

16. Some beggars adopt the worst and the most scanty clothing, to exhibit their extreme poverty. Others dress themselves in the neatest and the cleanliest manner, knowing that the sums given them will be larger, as to persons who have seen better days, and sustained a great and pitiable fall in life.



17. Foreigners, and pretended foreigners, hold out a card of address, with the simple question, "Parlez-vous Français?" The pretence is, that they are just arrived in London, having nothing but this card of address to some correspondent, whom they are unable to find, from a total ignorance of the town and of our language. Having once obtained the answer, "Oui, monsieur, un peu," and engaged a likely person, especially one who is a little proud of his French, in conversation, their point is more than half gained. They pass, with the most dexterous promptitude and rapidity, to the tale of their distress; and then their pertinacity and perseverance is only equalled by their ingenuity and volubility.

18. A man having purchased a little crazy cart and a worn-out horse, which shortly after dies, he makes it a pretence for going about with a petition, and certificate of his loss, to get subscriptions for a fresh horse, to a large amount.

19. There was an extensive practice at



one time of travelling the country with forged military and war-office passes, by women pretending to be soldiers' wives journeying to join their husbands' regiments; the overseers being bound to allow  $1\frac{1}{2}d.$  per mile to persons carrying these passes. An account is given in the Seventh Report of the Mendicity Society, for the year 1825 (p. 51), of the practices and conviction of a party for this pretence.

20. Carrying a basket of wares, or a few tapes or boxes, is sometimes a mere excuse for begging.

21. A handkerchief is tied over the forehead to give an appearance of illness; and sometimes the face is whitened artificially, but more frequently by the habit of drinking gin.

22. Women carry two or three children in their arms, sometimes borrowed; and either put them to sleep with gin, to make them look interesting, or pinch them to make them cry, as if from hunger.

These are only some of the most usual

forms adopted by professed beggars. Of course there are many others, as various almost as the accidents of life; and whenever any novel and unprecedented calamity has reduced a certain class of persons to ruin, and awakened compassion in the public mind, there are always some persons ready to take advantage of this general feeling, and to clothe themselves with the character which has excited so much interest. These usual forms, also, are continually varied in their particular features and circumstances.

Besides this, there is the whole class of writers of fictitious begging-letters, which are stuffed in turn with all the various bitter calamities and trials of which human life furnishes the examples. The above are only the outward and ostensible appearances put forward by street-beggars for the sake of advertisement, and with the hope of drawing upon them attention and compassion.

The first question is, how far these cases are numerous, and what proportion they bear to the number of applicants who are really

distressed. The next is, how far these falsehoods are apt to be mixed up with truth; and what is the conclusion which ought to be drawn from a thorough knowledge of all the classes which are the subject of relief.

To those who are inclined to give ear to the charges heaped of late years upon the poor, and who are ready to conclude, from the many instances of imposture brought to their notice, that all beggars are impostors, I would address the few following observations.

Falsehood is always the imitator of truth. Every imposture proves a reality; and is ever the representative of a real calamity which has afflicted some of our fellow-travellers in the journey of life. The human mind is not so inventive as to create for itself new scenes and images, which have never had existence. No man ever yet invented an entirely new thing, especially in life or morals. All beggars are no more proved to be impostors by the frequency of imposition, than all religion is proved to be false by the

multitude of false religions which are prevalent in the world. The basis of all these heresies is truth ; and so is the groundwork of the numerous frauds and false appearances which are assumed by beggars. It is like painting,—where nature is the whole foundation and study, and where art can add only a novel combination, or a somewhat higher colouring. It is acting,—where the parts and passions are real, and the substance of real incidents ; but the time and action is condensed, and the tone exaggerated.

Of most of the above-mentioned forms of imposition real examples have already been given in the former chapters. Of poor and deserving persons holding out a paper before them signifying their distress, an instance was referred to at page 45. Another instance may be found in the Report of the Mendicity Society for 1820, p. 49, of a paper praying relief for a family of seven children ; which proved to be a true and very distressing case. There are two more cases at pp. 38 and 39 of the Report of 1830.

Several examples have been given of persons sinking exhausted in the streets.

Of those distresses which arise temporarily and periodically, as among weavers, hay-makers, shipwrecked sailors, gardeners, —there can be no doubt of the existence of real distress in each of those forms ; since its known existence is the origin of the pretence. Even the gardeners who go about in winter, and the chimney-sweepers who go about on May-day, are most of them what they profess to be, though many others fictitiously assume the character.

The evidence afforded by local knowledge and the names of persons, though sometimes fictitious, is more often real ; and many urgent and interesting cases obtain notice entirely upon such evidence. Indeed, it is the obvious and natural test which must generally be applied ; and many true and distressing cases are effectually relieved upon the sole ground of this species of confirmation.

Shipwreck-certificates must sometimes

be real, for there is a legal provision made with respect to them. The same is the case with regard to military passes.

The loss of a poor miserable horse out of a vegetable-cart is sometimes a plea of little merit; but a case was referred to above of a man who had sold his donkey and cart during a time of illness, which was a very deserving case. An instance occurred lately, in which a poor man's horse was killed by an omnibus, and his cart broken. He was reinstated at an expense of 5*l.*, without which he must have become a beggar, and might have remained so for life. Many cases occur in which a poor man's horse, his only property, dies suddenly. A short time ago, a hackney-cabman, who drove on his own account, had his horse thrown down and wounded by an iron plug, which improperly projected above the pavement. The horse died afterwards of a locked jaw. The paving-board of the parish made good the loss to him, otherwise he might have been ruined.

The number of impostors has been greatly



exaggerated. The vast attention which has been paid to the subject, and the welcome which has been given to every information under this head, has almost possessed the public mind with the image and imitation, and made it forget the substance from which it is reflected.

In the Constabulary Force Report (1839), which is far from being disposed to give a favourable view of the state of the lowest classes, it is reckoned that, out of 16,901 delinquents, 50 only were begging-letter writers ; that 86 were bearers of begging letters ; that there were in London 221 mendicants' lodging-houses, containing on an average 11 in each (p. 13). This in a population of 1,500,000, and in a city which must consist of more than 100,000 houses.

There are not much above half-a-dozen professed and notorious begging-letter impostors practising at one time ; the rest are mostly habitual exaggerators of their real distresses, not going much farther from the truth than a wit is apt to think lawful in telling



a good story ; and nearly persuaded of the truth of what they assert by continual repetition. Even the professed letter-writers make use of occurrences drawn from real life ; and many of them only assist others in making known their misfortunes, sharing with them in the contributions. Those who are called impostors are much the most frequently persons who are in real distress ; but they have found their tale of misery so far productive, that it has tempted them to live on rather in an idle misery, than to make the exertion which they might have done to restore themselves by labour to a competency. So they go on repeating their story of distress, omitting to mention the date, and sometimes adding additional facts, most of them founded in truth, but greatly exaggerated. These characters are almost all of them in distress.

The supposed number of impostors is increased from another circumstance. The poor are very little capable of observation, or given to accuracy. They wrongly de-

scribe their residence, or the residence of those they refer to ; and this they do constantly. The consequence is, that when visited, no such person is found at that place ; and whether we inquire ourselves, or send an overseer or other officer, we conclude at once that it is a case of imposition. This is more frequently the case when paid officers are the visitors, who must do their duty as a matter of business ; and when once they have arrived at one apparently conclusive fact and evidence against the party, they are happy to return with this conclusion to their employers. I have frequently found that, by a little perseverance, the worst appearances subsequently vanish, and that the most obvious symptoms of fraud become explained by a little patience and tenderness ; so much so, that I have found reason to conclude that fictitious tales of distress are not nearly so common as they are generally supposed to be, even by those professionally engaged in visiting and relieving the poor ; and that a willingness to believe

the truth of the tale, and a belief that there may be a mistake and misdescription, is much more likely to lead us to discover the real truth, than a readiness to conclude from the first contradiction that the case is an imposture. It is constantly the case that poor people do not know the number of their house or lodging; they very frequently do not know the name of the street. It is still more common, in the small streets and alleys, that there should be two or three houses having the same number, in different parts of it. Many times they call the street by a wrong name; as saying lane for street, and street for place, yard, &c. No one without experience could believe how frequently these things happen.

There are numerous other mistakes and misapprehensions, which persons can and do take advantage of, who are ready to look on the harsh side, and are willing to detect imposture. Persons who are willing to believe and charitable, are also liable to be deceived by first appearances. Upon the

whole, it is wonderful how much the result of investigation is subject to the inclinations of the inquirers, and of how much importance it is, therefore, that a really right view and Christian feeling should be entertained in regard to the condition, and practices, and dispositions of the poor, and of the duties which are incumbent upon us in relation to them.

I shall proceed to observe upon these duties, and the manner in which they are generally fulfilled. But, first, it will be requisite, in order to our forming a right estimate of these our obligations and performances, that we should divest ourselves of the false notion that the poor-laws furnish a sufficient provision for the poor, and supersede our own private and natural duties towards them. There is no opinion which bears more hardly and cruelly upon the necessitous. Independent of the harsh and imperfect administration, there are essential principles which occasion a compulsory and public provision to be inadequate. I pro-

ceed, therefore, to discuss this question of the sufficiency of a poor-law provision, and how far it supersedes our own private relations and duties towards the poor and needy, and ought to vary our conduct towards them. We shall then come better prepared to the consideration of our actual treatment of the poor, and the sufficiency of our charity, as compared with what it ought to be upon the real grounds of duty and policy.

## CHAPTER V.

### Private Alms and Poor-Law Relief.

PRIVATE CHARITY OUGHT TO SUPERSEDE THE PUBLIC PROVISION—THE PUBLIC PROVISION INADEQUATE IN AMOUNT—DEFECTIVE IN PRINCIPLE—EXAMPLES OF THIS—A POOR-LAW NECESSARY, BUT SUBSIDIARY—CONNEXION BETWEEN THE POOR-LAW AND POLICE—POOR-LAW INJURIOUS TO RICH AND POOR—RELATION BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE CHARITY—REMEDY PROPOSED—THE NEW POOR-LAW—THE WORKHOUSE TEST—ADVANTAGES OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATION AND SMALL DISTRICTS—EXAMPLES IN PRUSSIA—GOOD EFFECTS OF VOLUNTARY SYSTEM IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES—IN FRANCE—IN PIEDMONT—IN SAVOY—IN VENICE—THE AZORES—THE CANARIES—GREECE—SCOTLAND—IRELAND—MUTUAL CHARITIES OF THE IRISH POOR—CONCLUSION—ALMS OF THE CHURCH.

THERE can be no stronger symptom of the growing harshness and unchristian state of feeling towards the poor, than the opinion now affirmed, that the legal provision for the poor ought to be a substitute for private charity; that the one interferes with the other. There is none more erroneous. In

proportion as this opinion shall spread, and this principle be acted upon, the country will have lost its character, its moral strength, and its safety.

I venture to assert the exactly opposite principle. I maintain that *private charity ought to supersede the public provision*; and that the vitality of our alms, and the healthiness of our system of poor-relief, are in proportion as it does so. Not because the two things are inconsistent or incompatible one with the other; but that the one is a mere aid and make-weight, a substitute and assistant to the other,—and that voluntary charity alone contains all the essentials, as the intelligent and master principle.

There is one thing which strikes us at the outset in this inquiry, as indicative, if not conclusive, of the motive which gives birth to this opinion; namely, that invariably those very persons who would say to every beggar, “You must go to the parish,” and that “in a country with such an ample machinery and provision, it is a crime even



for a cripple to beg,"—are the same persons who would narrow down the parish-relief to the lowest scale, and be most severe in applying the test-standard.

I do not desire to enter particularly upon the existing poor-law system, though it is very difficult to keep our observation distinct from this point; because the Poor-Law Commissioners have mixed themselves up with this question; and, while boasting of having already saved two millions annually to the country in poor-rates, complain bitterly, and with little moderation of language, of the interference which their systems and theories have met with from voluntary and private charity.<sup>a</sup> They avow openly that, "One principal object of a compulsory provision for the relief of destitution, *is the prevention of almsgiving.*"<sup>b</sup> There could not be

<sup>a</sup> Report of Poor-Law Commissioners on Continuance of Commission, 1840. 8vo, pp. 11, 62, 63; *ante*, pp. 20, 21.

<sup>b</sup> Official Circular of the Poor-Law Commissioners, No. 5.

afforded a more direct or convincing proof of the assertion, that it is those who narrow the public relief most who would limit all charity to the legal provision.

The proposition that the poor-law may be a substitute for voluntary charity, is false in fact and in principle. I will confine myself at first to the facts which exhibit its injustice and impracticability.

In the first place, What is the amount of the poor-rates in comparison with the rights and necessities of the poor? What is the amount of the poor-rates in this country in comparison with its wealth? For this is the means of ascertaining what ought to be the amount of the poor man's inheritance. The Jews were commanded to give a tenth to the priesthood, and another tenth to the poor and in hospitality. So say Lowman and Selden, and their own interpreters.<sup>b</sup> And this was

<sup>b</sup> The provision for the poor among the Jews consisted expressly only of a tithe every third year, which was emphatically called the poor man's tithe. But in the other two years, a tithe was to be spent in hospi-

adjudged necessary in an agricultural country; where there were, moreover, especial guards against the increase of poverty—by the equal division of land, and its periodical return to the original owners. But the necessities of the poor increase greatly with

tality, which must have been intended especially to include the poor (LOWMAN'S *Hebrew Government*, pp. 117, 118; Luke xiv. 12, 13). The poor were also to have the natural productions of the sabbatical year. Public tables were also kept in principal towns, at which all classes and ranks feasted together (MILMAN'S *History of the Jews*). The very numerous sacrifices also were dispensed in hospitality and to the poor (1 Kings xix. 21); and portions were distributed to them at public and private festivals (Neh. viii. 10; Esth. ix. 22; Tobit ii. 2). The Israelites were, besides all this, expressly and repeatedly commanded to be liberal in private and personal charity, and to open wide their hand on all occasions to the poor, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow (Lev. xxv. 35; Deut. xv. 7, 8). So that a simple tithe cannot be supposed to more than barely represent the real amount of the provision for the poor among the Jews, according to the Mosaic enactments. (See ROBINSON'S *Ancient Poor-Laws*, pp. 2-4).

the accumulation of wealth, and the advance of luxury and civilisation. This may be seen conspicuously in commercial towns, and in every metropolis. We must conclude, therefore, that one-tenth would be but an insufficient provision in this country, so much advanced beyond any other in this half of the globe, in wealth, luxury, and civilisation.

The income of Great Britain alone is credibly supposed greatly to exceed five hundred millions. The poor-rates, which were at one time seven millions, and were then thought ruinous, are now reduced to about five millions. A magnificent contribution this—an ample provision truly, in proportion to our wealth and our means, and to the poor's necessities !

And at the same time, our voluntary and private charities are by no means so abundant as we are apt to boast and congratulate ourselves. If the whole amount were to be added to the poor-rates, they would make together but a sorry comparison with

our means and income—a sorry comparison with the bounty of any other nation.<sup>c</sup>

And yet our public national charities are our daily boast; and the amount of the poor-rates is complained of; and the burden of the poor is said to be intolerable; and the too large amount given is lamented as encouraging and increasing without limit the numbers of the poor, and threatening us with the flood of a national pauperism. Let us first begin with the experiment of giving something more than a very small fraction of what we owe to the poor as a divine right and inheritance; and then let us begin to speculate as to whether our liberality and our obedience to our duty is swamping and overwhelming us; and whether our belief in, and obedience to God's law, is bringing upon us a curse or a blessing.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>c</sup> Some comparison between the English and the foreign public charities will be made in the next chapter.

<sup>d</sup> When the Jews were being punished for their disobedience and idolatry, then they said that their

The legal provision for the poor being thus inadequate, let us turn to its practical application, and weigh its sufficiency and adaptation in fact to particular classes of cases. The first principle of poor-law relief is simplicity and uniformity. It cannot carefully adapt itself to occasions and circumstances. Whether the workhouse be the only method of relief, or whether the rule be more liberal and bending, still there is one rule which must be acknowledged uniform and strict,—that no one shall be entitled to parish-relief who has any thing of his own remaining. Therefore a mechanic with a starving family, who can have work in a week, must sell his tools before the

miseries were caused by their serving God too closely ; and that their only safety was in going more deeply into idolatry (Jer. xlv. 17, 18). So it ever will be. The further we go in sin and disobedience, and the more we are suffering the punishment and consequences of it, the more we feel persuaded that our only hope and happiness is in going deeper in our selfish courses ; and that God's word and wisdom are our greatest bane and enemy.



guardians will relieve him. Another, broken with temporary loss or sickness, must part with his cottage. The man who has a good character and connexion in the place where he is known, must be removed to his parish, which he never saw, and where he must be on a level with the lowest pauper. The hawker, having lost his horse by accident, must sell his cart too, and sink through every other step to the lowest stage of pauperism. The reports of the Mendicity Society are full of such cases; and they conclude the case of a lad of fifteen, who had been enticed to London, and was restored by them to his friends, with the following observation:—

“ This case strongly exemplifies one of the advantages of the society,—*that of inquiring into and relieving cases rejected by parish authorities, in consequence of not being parishioners.* This boy was sleeping in a neighbourhood notorious for bad characters, and under their influence and example would probably have soon added one to the already large number of juvenile delinquents. With-



out employment or means of support, no other prospect awaited him, had he not been providentially met with by the gentleman who brought him to the office, and who attended to the case until it was so satisfactorily disposed of.”<sup>e</sup>

The reports of the Mendicity Society contain numerous cases of veteran soldiers and sailors, for some of whom they have obtained pensions, for others prize-money, for some persons legacies, or claims of a similar description. In many cases where a ship was not about to sail for a certain time, they have supported passengers returning to their friends, or seamen, during the interval. Multitudes have been set up by loans. And here it may be remarked, that though the Poor-Law Amendment Act enables the guardians to give relief by way of loan, this is not a benefit, but a restriction. This is not applicable to a loan for advancing a man in his business; but is a power only of re-

<sup>e</sup> Report 1830, p. 33.

covering the value of his victuals and lodging back from him again.

But there are cases which are wholly beyond the sphere of the parish-officers, and for which the legal provision never can fitly provide. In the case of master-tradesmen, of reduced officers, men of the learned professions and of superior education, is it fit that such persons should be consigned to a workhouse? Yet such cases are very numerous. A keeper of one of the large taverns in London is now reduced to writing begging-letters. Most persons reputed to be charitable, who have been educated at the first public schools, have received applications on behalf of some of their former school-fellows now reduced to misfortune—some of them to abject penury. The Report of the Mendicity Society for 1835 mentions the son of a lord mayor. But I have enumerated cases enough for example.

Can any of these cases be fit for parish-relief? and can the poor-law be applied to them as an adequate provision? Are the

sufferings of all persons alike under the same degradation? And are the feelings of the mind never to be considered or relieved, as well as the body and the appetite, but to be reduced to a uniform measure and standard, as the belly by a dietary?

But, "oh," it will be said, "these are mere exceptions, not fit to disturb a rule, or to form a ground for any provision specially applicable to them." *All cases are exceptions.* There is no case in life that has not its special circumstances, and whose circumstances are not fit to be inquired into—and must be inquired into and considered before right and justice can be done to the person concerned,—which is the real equality.

I would go further, and say, that, to consign the cripple, the maimed, the halt, the blind, and the paralytic, to a workhouse and an exact diet, and the same rule as the sturdy and idle beggar, the drunkard and profligate, is not an equal and uniform system; but the most downright injustice and inequality. Because God has afflicted them

with one sore evil, are we bound to inflict another, and make their affliction still sorer? This can never be equality. Ought we not to raise them as much as we can out of their depth of misery, and endeavour to compensate and make up to them their loss and inferiority? And must we not let them even try to raise themselves? And must they not themselves be allowed to ask, nor we to give to them, an occasional and liberal alms, which is dictated by all our natural good feelings, — because, forsooth, they may sometimes get more by it than a hale man by his work, and because the poor-law has provided just enough to keep them from starving? Can all that we can do raise them to the same happy position with ourselves? and can all that we can bestow compensate them for the loss of limb, of eyesight, or motion? and is this, I ask, liberty or equality?

I say, then, that private alms *may* supersede the legal provision for the poor; but the poor-law can never be a substitute for private charity.

A legal provision for the poor is in its *principle* also inadequate to the necessities and the rights of the poor, and ought never to supersede private charity. It is an inferior instrument and obligation—a mechanical and imperfect expedient—a prop to a falling house, which never can fulfil the uses of the original design and construction, and preserve its symmetry and safety.

I do not mean to say that a poor-law is bad under the circumstances; but I regret the circumstances which make it good and necessary; and would desire that they should never have existed, or that we might remove them. I do not say that a poor-rate is not charity, or that the poor-law is not an act of public virtue, and, so far at least as its objects and provisions have the comfort of the poor for their motive, is not entitled to great respect and praise. Believing firmly, as I do, that the state has a conscience, and that the country must answer for the acts and sins of its government—especially this country, where we effectually choose our

own rulers,—I consider that public alms are a public virtue, warding off a judgment and a curse, or bringing down a blessing, according to its measure and its motive; or else, upon what grounds ought we to have paid twenty millions out of the public purse for the redemption of slaves?

But it is inferior to the rule and practice of voluntary almsgiving; which practice is a law imposed by the people upon themselves. And so completely are the minds and consciences of the people, of this country especially, bound up and identified with the conscience of the government, that, as they must inherit a reward for obliging themselves to a liberal and voluntary almsgiving, which law they carry into execution with their own hand; so must they also inherit a curse or a diminished blessing for putting the distribution of their alms out of their own hands into the hands of public officers, and in proportion to the scantiness or the liberality of the funds which they give them to distribute.



It is the same thing, one step further removed, as the supporting an hospital by subscription, and leaving the whole care and management to a committee of directors; only there is a wide difference as to the kindness and motive in consigning a sick or wounded man to an hospital, which is better to him than his own home under the circumstances, and a man wanting food and clothing, to a work-house, which he abominates.

Every law of man is a part of the law of God, and operative as a substitute, and in aid of it. It enforces its obligations by inferior motives—by inferior but more immediate punishments; and the rule which it adopts and enforces is, in the same proportion, inferior and imperfect. The people are bound in conscience to obey this law, and must incur guilt or praise for disobeying or breaking it; for the law of man is a part of God's law; and obedience to law is obedience to God; and in obeying the laws of human government, they are obeying the law



and command of God, who both ordained the law and established the government.

Every law, then, is in its nature an imperfect substitute for a more perfect code, in consequence of irreligion and degeneracy; “it is added because of transgressions.”

The poor-law comes later than the rest in the history of legislation, because it is rendered needful by a more advanced stage of selfishness and degeneracy. But though it exists, and is binding in conscience, and is a part of the character and virtue, or vice, of the country, yet the higher and more perfect duty of private and voluntary almsgiving still exists in all its force, and is binding upon the conscience; and its neglect or fulfilment is closely bound up with the sin or the virtue, the prosperity or the punishment of the nation.

The poor-law is a subsidiary and an imperfect law; and these are its characteristics.

It can only operate upon the objects of it, and provide for them in masses—by broad

unbending rules, coarsely graduated, suited to the general state of those large classes and masses of people, upon which alone it can exercise a discernment. Nice discrimination cannot enter into the operations and practice of officials, or into accounts which must be kept with rigid strictness and wholesale uniformity; nor that fine elastic touch be applied of sympathy and vital charity, which discriminates the pulse of misery in its infinite variety, discerns the real seat of the wound, and applies the oil and the balm with a truth and touch as exact, as tender, and as delicate. But all stomachs must be of the same size; all appetites must relish the same food on the same days of the week; all maladies, and sores, and accidents of life, must be healed by the same medicine.

A poor-law can hardly be administered any where except in connexion with police regulations; and this of necessity places misery and misfortune in close contact with crime and punishment. At least this is eminently the case in England. Thieves, able-

bodied sturdy beggars, persons travelling to seek for work or returning to their homes, cripples, blind, infirm, children, persons sick from the visitation of God, from accident, or intemperance,—all are classed and clubbed together, and are placed in the same category by the receipt of a penny, and are liable to be dealt with according to law, under the condemned title of vagrants. A poor and very decent woman, formerly a maid-servant, was taken up on the 19th of last May, for carrying round a petition signed by several ladies who knew her, and who testified to the truth of the statement of her misfortune, and had put themselves down for subscriptions. She was much astonished on being told, by a paid officer, that she was infringing the law.

The government, it is true, cannot do better than keep up a vigilant system of police to detect real imposture, or rather enact severe punishments for obtaining, and attempting to obtain money under false pretences of misfortune. But this is far differ-

ent from making every act of begging a crime, and the receipt of money offered an evidence of it, however the case stated may be founded in truth, and however urgent the necessity. Our law might improve its spirit from the code of Sancho Panza, who, knowing from his own experience that paid officials too can yield to bold importunity and imposture, and browbeat the timid and really deserving, “appointed an officer of the poor, not to persecute, but to examine them, and know whether they were truly such; for under pretence of counterfeit lameness and artificial sores, many canting vagabonds do impudently rob the true poor of charity, to spend it in riot and drunkenness.”

The provisions of our poor-law system go upon a different principle. Being based in luxury and disdain, and a selfish sensibility, we persecute the whole herd of beggars, not to distinguish and punish the impostors, but to get rid of an annoyance and nuisance which vexes us; and this is evidenced by the indiscriminate way in which

the law drives beggars and vendors of small wares from the pavements, and our sweeping condemnation of all who beg—whether their tale be true or false—whether they be maimed, or blind, or able-bodied,—as impostors. *Pauperies immunda*: poverty is filthy. We must relieve ourselves from the sight of it; and if poverty really exists, why, it must be provided for in secret, and apart from the haunts of business and civilisation. And if, after having expelled all these strong natural excitements from our eyes and senses, there should still lurk behind some appetite for pity and sympathy, from the necessity of our nature, and the rebound of better and of kinder feelings,—why, then these must be satiated in a novel or a theatre, by

“ The sluggard pity’s vision-weaving tribe,

Who sigh for wretchedness, yet shun the wretched.”

The necessary connexion between a poor-law and these severe police-regulations, is evidenced by the tendency towards them in every country in Europe in which a legal provision for the poor is made the basis of their relief.

In England, the poor-laws and vagrant-laws began, and have always gone hand in hand together. Provisions for the support of the poor, and for the punishment of beggars and vagrants, are constantly found in the same statute.<sup>d</sup> The statutes which preceded

<sup>d</sup> 22d Henry VIII. c. 12: "An act directing how aged, poor, and impotent persons, compelled to live by alms, shall be ordered; and how vagabonds and beggars shall be punished." (This statute is the effectual foundation both of our poor-laws and vagrant-laws.) 27th Henry VIII. c. 25: both subjects are treated together, as in the last act. 1st Edward VI. c. 3: "An act for the punishment of vagabonds, and for the reliefe of the poore and impotent persons." 3d and 4th Edward VI. c. 16; 14th Eliz. c. 5: "An act for the punishment of vagabonds, and for relief of the poor and impotent." This is the groundwork of the famous 43d of Elizabeth; and in sect. 20, as that statute in sect. 4, provides for the whipping, stocking, imprisonment, &c. of aged and impotent people partly disabled, who would not work.

The punishment of vagrants, by 22d and 27th Hen. VIII., was whipping, stocking for three days and three nights with bread and water, and cutting off the gristle of the right ear; by 1st Edward VI., it was slavery for



and formed the groundwork of the famous act of the 43d of Elizabeth, were passed full as much for the purpose of removing the nuisance of beggars, as for the relief of the necessitous, as their preambles testify. The establishment of a legal provision was necessary to justify the condemnation of beggary, and to render it practicable.

The poor-law system is bad in principle, —it is a mere expedient; and it ought never to supersede the more free and active distribution of relief by voluntary and personal charity. A resort to a compulsory provision for the poor is the symptom of a low state of religion in a country, and of public principle. A disposition to place a chief reliance upon such a provision is the sign of a diseased and morbid constitution, and an enervation almost desperate; and there is no hope of restitution to vigour and health in such cases, but by waking up again the dormant two years; by 14th Elizabeth, it was burning through the gristle of the ear with a hot iron an inch in compass.



principles and energies of nature, and returning as fast as possible to sober and rational habits, by voluntary almsgiving—superseding the compulsory provision.

Compulsory relief is destitute of almost all the virtues of charity. It is equally injurious to the rich and to the poor; and for every virtue which it excludes, it introduces at least two vices. It is not charity, but a tax; and as being a tax, it is considered that it may be lawfully economised as much as possible—nay, that it is a virtue to economise it. The collector represents the poor; but he carries about with him none of those claims to compassion and sympathy which might move the heart, and enlist the feelings, and make the impulse to give stronger than to withhold;—for I cannot be one of those who think that the feelings and affections,—the half of ourselves, and the better half, if rightly governed and directed,—were given only to pervert and misguide us, and to lead aside our judgments. The collector represents the poor; and we always feel

bound to dispute his account, and to reduce it as much as possible. So the motive and the habit are always present to dispose us to make our contribution small and niggardly; the tale of misery and calamity—the visitation of God to try us as well as them—the loss of sight or limb, the pallid look, the depressed and anxious countenance, are not present, which might make our contribution a pleasure instead of an exaction, and dispose us to increase it. I have seen a plump and pretty young girl turned into an old woman, in appearance, by the distresses of the three first years of her marriage. But this was not seen or known by the rate-payers of her parish.

Thus we are at war with the poor; and grudge every shilling that is taxed upon us by the poor-rate. And we are not anxious or careful to make a distinction, when the same persons plead to us for a voluntary gratuity. It is the business and merit of officials to economise the funds, and to discover all imposture and deceit; and their

report of as many such detections as possible is the warrant of their fitness and services. Thus our minds are fed and filled with such facts by persons officially employed to discover, and interested in the report of them. But there is no such poor man's officer, paid or voluntary, to discover and make known the opposite facts; except it be sometimes the public journals, which give some few of them circulation, when occasion offers, as matters of interest and excitement.

Count Holstein, in answer to the inquiries of our Foreign Secretary of State in 1833, respecting the working of the poor-law in Denmark, states,—

“The morality of the rich man suffers; for the natural moral relation between him and the poor man has become completely severed. There is no place left for the exercise of his benevolence. Being obliged to give, he does it with reluctance; and thus is the highest principle of charitable action, Christian love, exposed to great danger of destruction.”

Mr. Browne, in his report from the same country, adds,—

“What is given is afforded with dislike and reluctance. The higher orders have become cold and uncharitable; and, in short, ere long, unless some strenuous steps are taken, Denmark will drink deep of the bitter cup of which England, by a similar system, has been so long drinking to her grievous cost.”<sup>f</sup>

The poor-law had been introduced into Denmark at that time only thirty-five years.

The following case exemplifies the relative sympathies and liberality of the rich towards the poor, and of the poor towards each other, under the operation of our compulsory system. A bricklayer named Hoggan, in May 1840, met with an accident, and died the same night at eleven o'clock. His only child died of a fever at seven the same evening. Several gentlefolks who were consulted, and took an interest in the case, agreed that it would be right, by all means,

<sup>f</sup> Senior's Foreign Poor-Law, pp. 42, 44.

to let the parish bury them, and limit all charity to the relief of the widow. His fellow-workmen subscribed among themselves, and buried both the child and the husband.<sup>g</sup>

But the operation of a legal and compulsory provision is almost as injurious upon the minds and habits of the poor themselves as upon those of the rich. It places the poor man in a state of war with the rich; from whom he receives all that he can exact as a right, and as given, not from favour and kindness,—as indeed it is not,—

<sup>g</sup> The decent burying of the dead seems to be in a peculiar manner a proper subject of charity. The alms-deeds of Tobit, in this particular, are highly commended by St. Ambrose. But there is a peculiar sanctity and solemnity in the act. The universal consent of all nations to the importance of this rite, and especially the ancient belief, that unless a little earth were thrown upon the dead bones (the same ceremony which is now used together with the words “ashes to ashes, dust to dust”), the deceased could not pass into Elysium, — seem to point from the earliest time to the revelation of the great mystery, that the corn of wheat must be sown into the earth ere it could sprout

but by necessity and compulsion. He naturally thinks it too little, and therefore he feels that all trick and exaggeration are justifiable; and, as in all other cases of hostilities once commenced, he is not nice as to the means which he devises and adopts to obtain what he has in his own cause judged to be his rights; and if he finds that his energies and strength are increased by a misapprehension of his enemy's character again; that the body must be actually and spiritually dead and buried, ere it can rise again and partake of the resurrection.

One of the most constant and highly esteemed objects of the religious gilds or fraternities in Roman Catholic countries, and of the friendly societies in England, is the burying and attendance upon the funerals of the dead.

It has been religiously questioned also, whether that earthly tabernacle, which has once been the temple of the Holy Ghost, ought ever to be desecrated. When the statute authorising the dissection of the bodies of unclaimed paupers at the workhouses came into force, the then governor of the workhouse in St. Giles's resigned his situation, rather than carry the act into operation.



and circumstances, why, he fosters the feeling, and delights to contemplate him as a fiend or a tyrant. The principle and feeling of gratitude is extinct.

The frugality, and force of character, and independence of the labouring man, are weakened, if not destroyed, by this miserable dependence. The amount given always creates a greater expectation than it realises. The poor man, feeling that he has a resource and a claim, is always made more idle than the money's worth, by every shilling that he has received without working for it; and the rich man, seeing this effect, narrows down the allowance more and more, to the exact limit between existence and starvation; though he cannot ever restore thereby the just equilibrium between wages and labour, between giving and receiving, which nature has fixed,—in the case of wages, by generosity on the one hand, and honesty and independence of feeling on the other,—in the case of alms, by kindness and gratitude.

The mutual dependence of parents and



children, and other relations, is also impaired, and their natural affection diminished. Being comparatively independent of each other, the affections become blunted. I shall presently bring to notice the existence and exuberance of these feelings, in all their depth and freshness, in those countries of Europe in which they are yet uninvaded by a poor-law. In the meantime, the testimonies are abundant to the destructive effect in this and other countries where our system of poor-laws exists.

As early as the act 7 Jac. 1, c. 4, the statute of Elizabeth was represented as having a tendency to produce improvidence, and to weaken the ties of natural affection. And these effects have been growing into ripeness ever since.

Mr. Browne, in the report before mentioned, says of Denmark,

“The poor-law greatly weakens the frugal principle.”—“It tends to harden the heart of the poor man, who demands with all that authority with which the legal right

to provision invests him. There is no thankfulness for what is gotten, and what is given is afforded with dislike and reluctance.”—“Poverty has been greatly increased by weakening the springs of individual effort, and destroying independence of character. The lower orders have become tricky, sturdy, and unobliging; the higher orders, cold and uncharitable.”—“It disturbs the natural dependence and affection of parent and child. The latter feels his parent comparatively needless to him; he obtains support elsewhere; and the former feels the obligation to support the latter greatly diminished. In short, being comparatively independent of each other, the affections must inevitably become blunted.”<sup>h</sup>

What has been said is independent of the religious obligation “to visit the fatherless and poor in their affliction,” and of the promise made to those who visit the sick by Him who himself spent his whole time in going about doing good. This obligation

<sup>h</sup> Senior’s Foreign Poor-Law, pp. 42, 43.

ought of itself to render all arguments needless.<sup>i</sup>

While shewing the harshness and heartlessness of the poor-law system, I am not recommending its abolition. When a people will not obey of themselves the perfect laws of God, they must ever be constrained by human imperfection. I am addressing myself chiefly to men in their private duties, and within their own sphere and capacities; and I say that it rests with them to remedy the existing evils—in a great measure at least. The true and requisite principle is, that private charity should outstrip the public provision; being so abundant and sufficient as to render the law unnecessary. This is done in several countries in Europe where a public law exists, but lies dormant, because the backwardness of the people is never such as to call it into action. This was the case in Scotland generally till of late years, and is still so there to a very great extent.

<sup>i</sup> See the Dignity and Claims of the Christian Poor. Two Sermons, by Frederick Oakeley, M.A. Sermon ii.

We cannot get rid of the compulsory provision, or attempt to do so at present; but we ought to use every means and endeavour, by private bounty and attention to the poor, — by public encouragement of such endeavours, upon every ground of religion and policy, of private and public duty, — to arrest the mischief, to introduce a better principle; and if we cannot supersede the system of law-forced charity, with its attendant evils, at least to narrow and limit its operation, and prevent its increase.

Every effort made towards this end should be admired as an act of sound patriotism; every step gained should be made good and promoted; and the Poor-law Commissioners, if haply they have the good of their country at heart, ought to rejoice in it.

But while the evils of the present poor-law system are thus abundantly apparent, and the increasing numbers and miseries of the poor are such as to threaten us with a repetition of that national pauperism which infected Rome and Athens, when they were

verging towards their ruin,—the difficulty of devising a remedy is full as generally seen and confessed. I have endeavoured to prove the necessity of returning back again to the true principles of charity, and the primitive form and practice of poor-relief; and to shew what individuals ought to do, and must be exhorted and encouraged to do, both by the clergy and government, in their private sphere and duties:—but this is an operation of great magnitude, and the work of much time and gradual development, and supposes a vast change in the usages of society. What ought the law and the government to do in furtherance of this operation, or independent of it? This great change cannot be made at once. What is the first step?

This question, then, I will endeavour to solve. A practical proposition is required; and I will make suggestion of a practical and definite measure. Let the relief of the out-door poor by the guardians of unions be given up, and let it be restored to the

parishes. Let the board of Poor-Law Commissioners remain, for the purposes of advice and superintendence, but not of management; and let them communicate with the parishes direct. My reasons for this proposition are in accordance with the opinion expressed as to the ultimate end to be attained, and the proper form and principles of relief.

All the evils that have been pointed out as resulting from law-forced charity and a system of official relief, enter still more intensely into our present system under the changes introduced by the Poor-Law Amendment Act. The instruments applied are mechanical. The machinery used is adapted to wholesale manufacture—to reducing all articles to procrustian uniformity—to turning out pieces of goods of the same exact size, and pattern, and length. It is a steam-engine system, well worthy of this age of physical invention and mechanical contrivance; and well fitted to bring its wares into a marketable fashion and appearance,



sufficient for the current discernment of customers, at the lowest cost, and with the utmost despatch and regularity. Discrimination cannot enter into the system. The very term "classification," the beau-ideal of poor-law-commissioner management, excludes the notion of it. The very words "general rules and regulations" exclude the possibility of it.

Only think of reducing all stomachs to one calibre by a strict and rigid dietary, and that dietary somewhat below the lowest scale of subsistence in the neighbourhood! But the habits, and occupations, and feelings, must be pressed in like manner into one uniform mould. If the fall has been from wealth and high station, and habits of comfort, and good society, and education, the rules and orders, and the classification, have no mould to fit such cases; if a loan is required, or advice, or assistance in recovering a debt, or tools or clothes require to be redeemed, to restore a man or woman to useful employment, there is no rule to warrant



such expenses before the auditor, no column for such an item of account. Very far different this from the Mosaic code, as explained by the Jewish doctors, which required that endeavours should be made to restore the unfortunate to their station in society, and that garments and other things should be provided them corresponding with their rank. It may be assumed that Christians ought not to be less liberal in their alms-giving, and less compassionate towards the fallen and suffering, than the Jews were commanded to be.

But these features are common to poor-laws in general. The peculiar characteristics of our present amended system, independent of the superintendence of the commissioners, are the workhouse-plan, and the union of parishes into districts. This plan of the *workhouse-test*, and the enlargement of districts for the management of the poor, are essentially connected. I abhor both of them. It is an iron-bound, unexpansive system. It multiplies and aggravates

all the evils which have been attributed to legal and forced provisions for the poor in general ; and it forcibly opposes itself to a return, even to the experiment of a return, to the plan of voluntary alms-giving.

To reduce all stomachs of the same sex and age to one calibre,—to reduce all habits and skill and tastes to a few fixed occupations,—is abhorrent enough to the variety of human nature ; but to test all shapes and habits of the body and mind, all tastes and desires and feelings, by the workhouse,—to try all claims to relief by this assay,—the measure of actual endurance from poverty by the capacity to bear this other endurance in the alternative,—this is certainly one of the boldest and most fallacious attempts to enforce mechanical rule and contrivance upon human minds and motives that has ever been ventured upon by town-made politicians.

While this deformed and rigid mask, without all play of feature and countenance,

incapable of motion or expression, is thus placed before the face of real charity by the very use and nature of official relief, its deformities are still more characteristic, and become more essential, in proportion as the districts are enlarged over which one machine and system stretches its operations. In proportion as the sphere is extended, and the ramifications become more numerous, the forms and rules must be more general and wholesale, and there must be less observance of the more distant parts, and less attention to particular varieties. Personal communication between the hand that gives and the hand that asks and receives, cannot be maintained. Personal knowledge cannot assay the genuineness, or the depth, or shades, or specific wants, of each case of alleged necessity ; neither can the relief be apportioned and applied with any truth and nicety. But the *test*-system must needs be resorted to ; and this test must become coarser and coarser, and less and less dis-

criminative, in proportion as the machine is enlarged, and made more powerful, and its operations are extended.

In this spirit the workhouse-test has been devised, and more and more commended. It is a substitute for inquiry. In this spirit the rules of the commissioners have been framed—and an endeavour has been made, but hitherto without success, to confirm them by parliament—which narrow and restrict the test-system down to a greater exactness and severity, and the forms of relief to a more rigid uniformity.

The most essential ingredient in poor-relief is personal communication, and knowledge of the exact condition of the objects of it. This communication can be kept up, can be even attempted, only in small divisions and districts; and this creation and extension of large districts, by unions of parishes, and unions of unions, is the most essential evil in the new system of poor-law administration. What is to be gained by this system? What is the professed object

of it? Economy, economy; the saving of expenses; money! money! We abhor the sordid and selfish idea. Get thee hence, Mammon! This is then the end of our prosperity and riches, that out of a meagre and miserable pittance doled out by us to the poor—a pittance less considerable than the duty paid upon ardent spirits—we must save some per centage; and this per centage must be placed in competition with a knowledge and relief of the particular wants and sufferings of a class of our fellow-countrymen, bearing a much larger per centage to the whole population of the country!

But I most of all object to this plan of extensive districts, because it prevents the experiment of returning in any degree to that wholesome system and condition, in which private and voluntary alms-giving supersedes the public compulsory provision, and renders the law of forced charity dormant and obsolete. No one parish can be encouraged to attempt such a system, while it is bound up in interests and expenses

with other parishes in a union, the whole machinery of which is connected and moves together. If a parish were to relieve the union from all burden in respect of it, and were to maintain its whole poor by private liberality, yet the contributions to the union workhouses would still be demanded, and the share of wages to the union officers must be paid. Nevertheless, it is the duty of parishes to make this experiment. As it is the duty of individuals to make this endeavour in a single parish—though the charitable few must be additionally burdened by such a measure, and the selfish majority relieved by it,—so it is the duty of parishes to agree within themselves, and attempt a like renovation, and to despise the paltry addition of expense which the demands of the union may impose upon them.

But a few such successful attempts would bring about a general change, by shewing the advantages of it. Whenever the public mind shall be prepared by experimental conviction, and its heart restored to healthy action by



the use and habit of genuine Christian charity, the law must follow this impulse, and be adapted to it. In the meantime, the impediment which is created by the union-system is greatly to be lamented.

But I must pursue this subject further, of the advantages of managing and relieving the poor in small districts. One chief advantage is, as we have just seen, that the inhabitants of small districts would be enabled to make trial of restoring that only true system of poor-relief, the providing for the indigent and sick by voluntary charity ; and thus superseding the compulsory provision. “ From the beginning,” observes Mr. Wilberforce, “ the Church relieved her own poor ; and in parishes of due dimensions she might do so again.”<sup>j</sup>

But the best feature of this arrangement, in respect of which it is equally beneficial as promoting the good working of the compulsory and the voluntary systems, is, that it enables the distributors to have perfect know-

<sup>j</sup> Parochial System, p. 40.



ledge of the deserts and wants of the parties benefiting by the distribution. This is quite essential to the right employment of all funds distributed by way of relief, upon grounds both of economy and justice. Within small rural districts people know one another. The wants and accidents of every near neighbour are the topic of interest and gossip between every two persons who meet, even without the additional attention that would be drawn by the probable need of assistance which might arise out of them. If town-made politicians suppose that the truth is better arrived at through the official visit of a relieving officer than by means of the village-gossip, and the collision and correction of idle and overstrained reports, I say they are mistaken. This is not a parliamentary means, but it is a practical means of arriving at truth ; not the mere knowledge of one single quæsitum or datum, as the degree of the pulse or of inanition, but of a fact and a truth ; being all the shades, and merits, and circum-

stances, of a particular case. And this can only be effected in small districts.

This it is that causes the good working of the Friendly Society system; that the parties live in the same small neighbourhood, and are all known to one another. There have been some difficulties as to the funds; to remedy which, political economists have recommended the members to join themselves into larger societies, occupying very extensive districts. And this is one instance in which the money-consideration, and the ledger-and-account question, has been made the sole mainspring of action, to the neglect of all other considerations, moral and social. The Provident Society plan, which is that of embracing large and comprehensive districts under one official superintendence, and paid management, has led in some places already to great abuse, and imposition upon the funds of the society, for want of proper information and knowledge of the parties receiving benefit, through the salaried officer.

The same evil exists under the union-system of poor-relief. The relieving officers are grossly ignorant of the real condition of the parties claiming assistance, and often more dependence is to be placed by the union-board of guardians upon the local and personal knowledge of the unpaid guardian of the particular parish, whose business it is not, than upon that of the relieving officer, whose business it is, and who receives his eighty or a hundred pounds a year for his services.

Human life does not admit of extensive friendships, and wide circles of intimacies and interests. Truth and reality all lie in particulars, and all interest is in details; and the more we deal in generals, and vast circles of information, and great numbers of people, the more our knowledge becomes superficial, and heartless and inanimate, and our intercourse degenerates into mere acquaintance.

No Briton can lightly regard the institutions of our Numa, the great founder of our

constitution ; unrivalled in modern times, and so full of vitality, of health and vigour, in its maturity of growth and manhood. Alfred, in establishing the hundreds and tithings, in addition to the larger divisions of counties then already existing, had especial regard to the intimacy and personal interest which exists between all the inhabitants of such small districts ; which enabled and obliged them to watch over and assist, and become responsible for one another. Let it ever be remembered that it is recorded of him—and it is more intimately connected with this institution than might appear at first sight—that “ he was a patient and minute arbiter in judicial investigations ; and this chiefly for the sake of the poor, to whose affairs, amongst his other duties, he day and night earnestly applied himself.” And again, continues Asser, “ In all his kingdom the poor had no helpers, or very few, besides him.”<sup>k</sup>

No bond of interest, economy, and sel-

<sup>k</sup> Asser, 69. Turner's Anglo-Saxons, vol. ii. p. 156.

fishness, can be a substitute for the ties of family union, through which the interests of each member and individual are the interest of every other member and of the whole; and the giver and receiver have both one common purpose, the general advantage, and no one is bent on oppressing or defrauding the rest. The nearer we approach to the habits and motives of family union, the more true and just, amicable and liberal, will be our conduct and communications; though not more economical and enriching. Charity begins at home; and our first duties and obligations are to our own family and neighbourhood. But a citizen of the wide world has no home; and the man of great and general interests has no family; and a man in a crowded city has no neighbourhood. To be vital and warm, the interest must be individual and personal. It was the animating principle of the Jewish settlement in Canaan, that the whole land should be occupied by distinct families, living together under common interests, and in

close and intimate connexion ; which proved favourable to the exercise of all good moral qualities and motives, and the enjoyment of perfect happiness,—when every one dwelt under his own vine and under his fig-tree ; but was not consistent with the desires, and objects, and economy, of accumulating riches.

The economy of the poor-relief in Prussia, as described by the returns of Mr. Gibsone and Mr. Abercrombie, confirms these views in every particular.

The whole of that country is divided into small districts, each comprising a moderate population. Even in the largest towns these districts never contain more than 1500 inhabitants, and in the smaller towns they contain from 400 to 1000. In villages, the management of the funds for relief of the poor is entrusted to the mayor and some of the principal inhabitants ; in the towns, they are under a board of directors. These individuals are required to find out and verify the condition of the poor of their own



district. Each township is governed by its own particular laws and customs with regard to the management of the poor; and the whole is under the inspection of the first section of the home-department.

“As regards the manner of obtaining the necessary funds, every thing is done by donations and private charity. Each house-proprietor, each inhabitant of a floor or apartment, is in his turn visited by some member of the sub-committee of the direction. The donations from residents are generally monthly, and vary in amount according to the number of the family and the generosity of the donor.

“The provision of the funds rests upon the charity and benevolence of the inhabitants.

“Every proprietor of an estate, indeed every town and village, is bound to provide for those belonging to them. Should a proprietor or a community not fulfil this obligation, they are compelled to do so; *but this is seldom necessary.*”



“As regards the practical working of this system,” adds Mr. Abercrombie, “I have no hesitation in affirming that it is found universally to succeed,—that the effect upon the comfort, character, and condition of the inhabitants is, first, to afford speedy and sufficient means of relief when necessary; that *it prevents in a great degree false applications, inasmuch as that the districts being small, the really needy are more easily discovered*; and, secondly, that *as no tax is fixed for the maintenance of the poor, it renders all classes more willing and anxious to assist*, according to their respective means, in sustaining the funds required for their support.”

Mr. Gibsone says—

“The regulations for the support of paupers operate beneficially on industry. Every proprietor of an estate, every community of a town or village, has unquestionably the most correct knowledge of the bodily condition, of the moral conduct, of the expertness, of the capability to earn a

livelihood in whole or in part, and of the pecuniary circumstances of the needy persons under their jurisdiction, whom they are bound to support, as well as of the circumstances of their relatives. The pauper knows that aid must be given when necessary, and he applies to the proper authority for it, when not duly afforded; while he is, on the other hand, deterred from making exorbitant claims by his situation being so thoroughly known in every respect, and from ungrounded demands not being complied with. In general, therefore, neither the party called upon for assistance, nor that requiring it, inclines to let the authority interpose.”<sup>1</sup>

With this example and others before us, let us return, as much as possible, to the plan of small districts. Where parishes are large or populous, let them be divided, instead of unionised. Let the commissioners exist, as a branch of the home-administration, to visit and superintend by their assistants each of these districts; to give ad-

<sup>1</sup> Senior's Foreign Poor-laws, pp. 45, 52.

vice and assistance ; to control abuses ; to give and obtain information ; but not to require a theoretical and mechanical uniformity. Above all, let them encourage and assist every experiment to restore and give effect to the voluntary administration of relief, so that it may, as much as possible, supersede the compulsory provision. Let the unions be abolished ; or if, on account of the recent erection of workhouses at enormous expenses, it must needs be that they should be made use of for a time, let the unions exist for the workhouse-administration alone. They are in the nature of hospitals ; and their affairs may perhaps be conducted with greater comfort and benefit to the inmates, as well as economy, from the establishment being upon a large scale. Let the parishioners themselves administer the general relief ; and let them give orders for the workhouse to the friendless, the impotent, the aged, and such as have no home or dependence, or any resort. Let them be poorhouses again, and not workhouses ; at

least not as a punishment, or a test. Let these be hospitals, and welcome asylums, and refuges for real distress and destitution ; and let the idle and able-bodied be tested by examination and out-door work.

Lord Denman, in his judgment in the case of the Whitechapel Union,<sup>m</sup> lays it down, that under the Poor-Law Amendment Act, 4 and 5 Will. 4, c. 76, the union guardians have not the administration of the out-door relief, but that this duty belongs to the parish officers ; and that the guardians are only guardians of the united workhouses. So that without any alteration of the law, the plans proposed might be carried into effect. The guardians and commissioners might forward these most desirable objects, and still keep within the policy, and spirit, and the actual provision of this law. But they have exceeded it.

I have pointed out many of the evils inherent in all systems of compulsory charity ; the harshness and injustice worked by all

. <sup>m</sup> 6 Adolphus and Ellis's Reports, p. 52.

such plans ; the hostile position to which it gives rise between the rich and the poor, the rate-payer and receiver ; and the injury which it does to the activity, character, habits, and generosity of feelings, of the one and of the other. Many other essential evils exist, which I might have proceeded to point out. One more, however, may be added ; namely, that while compulsory poor-rates are adopted to protect the generous, and because the burden of the poor would fall too heavily upon the charitable, this very operation defeats its own end. For one of the great evils of forced payments is, that they can reach only a small proportion of the property of the kingdom ; whereas if offerings were made of free gift, and from a general sense of duty and liberality, all the mass of personal and funded property would be brought into contribution, and the burden would fall lighter instead of heavier even upon the liberal. But the adoption of forced payments causes the charitable and generous dispositions to shrink and wither,

as the muscle wastes and contracts which is never exerted. The liberal sense and feelings of men might much more successfully be expanded to the exigencies of the time, in respect of the wants of the poor, by rousing and stimulating, and exercising them, than a tax and law-forced payment can be,—as the muscles enlarge by use, and become equal to the duty required of them. It is true that to this end there must be an original muscular power; an internal vital principle. If Christian motive is extinct,—if the body is paralysed and lifeless,—it must be supported by crutches and irons, and sustained by props; and we must rest contented with such grace and motions as may be maintained by strings and mechanism.

Having analysed the operations of compulsory poor-relief, and stated the superior advantages and merits of small districts, I proceed now, according to promise, to shew the good effects of the voluntary system of alms-giving. They will be found to be altogether as admirable as those of the forced



system are lifeless and prejudicial. And here also we have no need to rest our position upon mere speculation and reasoning. The examples and facts are ready at our hand, to furnish conclusive proofs—to exhibit a well-coloured, an animated, and beautiful picture. The reports made to our foreign secretary of state in 1833, of the provisions for the poor in different foreign countries, as contained in the appendix to the Poor-law report of that date, and in Mr. Senior's work on Foreign Poor-laws, supply us with the materials; as they have done in part of the picture which has been presented of the deadening and baneful effects of forced plans of poor-relief. It is remarkable that it was with these returns and this evidence before them, that the government prepared, and the legislature passed, the bill which rendered more imperative and strict the legal administration of relief.

These recent so stringent measures, however, so forcibly leaning in the wrong direction, are not without hope. It is sometimes



the effect of violent proceedings, that they produce reaction. The necessity for voluntary alms has become greater, with the increased straitness and severity of the rules and limits of official assistance; and, I thank God, in some degree this call has been responded to, and this occasion has opened forth richer sources of private charity than have been wont to overflow and fertilise the dry and withered wastes and drooping pastures of this once bountiful and beneficent land. If the unionising of unions, and the plan of large districts, do not prevent the experiment, we may have hope of seeing the system of private and voluntary almsgiving gradually, but yet effectually, growing and increasing, till it swallows up at length and supersedes the use of the compulsory provision. There could be no better sign and symptom,—I think that there could be no better means and step towards the recovery of religious motive and principle in the country, and its political regeneration,—than such an increasing use and effect of

voluntary alms-giving. But to our present purpose.

The accounts received from those countries which have no forced provision for the poor, are of the most striking and pleasing description. They present a picture of human nature and character which to us is quite new, and instructive, and awakening. They exhibit the feelings and characters of both rich and poor in a colouring and light amiable, honourable, and enviable. The rich are never to be found wanting in their alms, which expand and contract, and form and fit themselves to every necessity and occasion. There is no death from starvation in time of difficulty or dearth, no lavishness or abuse in time of prosperity. And what is very remarkable is, that there are not those signs of improvidence and profusion, and indiscriminate distribution of alms, which we are apt to attribute as the necessary concomitants of free and voluntary giving of charity for Christ's sake.

The picture of the poor themselves is

still more admirable and amiable. The people are industrious and frugal; honest towards their employers; and though the funds of charitable relief are known to be inexhaustible, yet they are indisposed to take advantage, or even to make use of them, unless occasion really calls for it. Their mutual kindness towards each other is still more instructive and beautiful. They are generally kind-hearted. Their family affection is ardent and constant; the mutual assistance of relations and friends is always to be depended upon, and is ever ready, and preferred to foreign support, so long as there are means within the bosom or branches of the family. Even neighbours and parishioners live together with the friendly feelings of relationship, and with family union and affection.

These are habits and principles of which we have little knowledge in this country. We can hardly believe or comprehend them. We are used to view things, even human life, with such calculating coldness, with

such mechanical and heartless exactness,—we have been so little apt to give religion full scope, and to obey its high rules and impulses with freedom, boldness, firmness, and faith,—that we have not a belief of the possibility of man's life being moved and governed by such motives, or of our passions and feelings being so ruled and regulated, and well directed, as to go before and lead onward the reason to the right and proper goal, and not away from it—much less that society could be so impelled, except to ruin and fanaticism.

Yet all these points are verified and exemplified by the returns before mentioned, from which I proceed to quote.

France is returned as a country having no legal provision for the poor; but the system there seems to be a mixed one; the funds consisting principally of endowments, but partly of contributions, partly also of direct taxation; and the government for the most part directing the administration. The establishments for relief in France are the

hospices, or poor-houses ; the hospitals, for the sick ; the dépôts de mendicité, for vagrants and beggars ; and the bureaux de bienfaisance, for out-door relief—the funds of these last consisting of apportionments of certain receipts not levied under the head of a poor-tax, and of voluntary contributions in churches and elsewhere. This out-door relief, which is liberal, is dispensed in a great measure, in Paris at least, by the gratuitous care and services of charitable persons, who also visit the objects of it. Of the working of this mixed system there is no very specific account given. But the liberality of the endowments in some of the great towns is immense. The hospitals are magnificent ; and the terms of admission are most liberal. The distribution of the funds for relief is also free and beneficent ; and there is no complaint of its effects upon the poor. A fuller account of the foreign hospitals, and of the principles of relief in Paris, will be given in the next chapter. But of the agricultural popula-

tion of Brittany, where begging is general, and not considered disgraceful, the following description is given :—

“The Bretons are hospitable. Charity and hospitality are considered religious duties. Food and shelter for a night are never refused.”<sup>n</sup>

In Piedmont, mendicity is not forbidden by law ; but the law which forbids the poor begging out of their parishes is frequently put in force. “The poor never receive any relief from the government or municipal authorities ; all they get is from private charity.” Sometimes, on festivals, clothes and food are distributed by the public bounty to the most needy ; and when a bad season occasions distress, the authorities set on foot public works, in order to give employment to the able-bodied. The effect upon the poor themselves is thus described by an observer evidently unfavourable to the system, and rather surprised at such a result.

“Nor are family ties affected by the chari-

<sup>n</sup> Senior's Foreign Poor-laws, pp. 154, 162.



table institutions. Whatever those may be, the poor man ever considers his relations as his sole support against adversity. Besides, as the Roman law with respect to paternal authority has been preserved among us unimpaired, family union is more easy and common than any where else.”<sup>o</sup>

“Mendicity is very common in Chambery and the Haute Tarentaise.” In the “other provinces (of Savoy), it is not more extensive than in Florence, and much less so than in Italy.” From different supposed causes, “mendicity has much diminished.” “Vagrant mendicity is prohibited by law; and beggars have no right to relief.”

“The duchy possesses nearly 250 charitable establishments, possessing funds set apart for the relief of the poor of the place in which they are situated. Their resources are very far from being sufficient for that purpose, especially in years of bad harvests. But poor families are assisted by their neighbours, their relations, the clergy, and other

<sup>o</sup> Senior's Foreign Poor-laws, pp. 181, 185.



charitable persons in their parishes. This relief is distributed in the town of Chambery, according to a simple and excellent system. *The poor are divided into twenty-four districts, each confided to a committee, consisting of three ladies of charity (dames de charité), belonging in general to the highest classes of society. Each committee seeks out, registers, and superintends the poor of its district, gives secret assistance to those families who would be disgraced by the publicity of their situation, and withdraws relief from the unworthy.*"<sup>p</sup>

What a lesson in religion, in morals, in wisdom, in civilised and social feelings, does this description,—of politic and simple management, of gratuitous, condescending, self-denying and devoted services, of fine and tender sympathy and feelings,—afford to us in this country, where our sensibilities are blunted, our feelings fettered by arithmetic and mechanism, the inventive variety and elasticity of the heart's freedom and sym-

<sup>p</sup> Senior's Foreign Poor-laws, pp. 187, 188.

pathy are bound down by rules and tables, and the half, the better half of human nature is extinct ! What poor-law rules and orders, or official examinations, or work-house-test, or tables, or dietary, can come in competition with this natural and living agency of the heart—the Christianised heart ? Oh ! but these are the perfection and triumph, and ultimatum of refined reason, of concentrated mind, of solitary, despotic intellect !

The return proceeds—

“The resources of the dames de charité consist only of one-tenth of the prices of the theatrical tickets, of the great public collections made at Easter and Christmas, and of *some secret gifts from individuals*. If this establishment were rich enough to provide employment for indigent families at their homes, it would be far superior to all other charitable institutions.”

However, even this suggested deficiency does not seem to be felt ; for the report proceeds thus—

“The poor never apply for relief to the authorities, but always to private charity; and it is inexhaustible, for (except during the famine of the year 1817) no one has ever perished from want.”<sup>1</sup>

In Venice, the funds are supplied by private and government contributions. There is no compulsory legal provision. The number of poor is immense, owing to the fall of the republic, and the great decay of the place. However, the return informs us that—

“Cases of death by starvation never occur. Even during the great distress caused by the blockade in 1813, and the famine in 1817, no occurrence of this kind was known. In fact, the more urgent the circumstances are, the more abundant are the subscriptions and donations.”

“The poorer classes are remarkable for their kindness to each other in times of sickness and need. Many instances of this have fallen under my own observation.”

<sup>1</sup> Senior's Foreign Poor-laws, pp. 188, 189.

“There is much family affection in all classes of the Venetians; and in sickness, distress, and old age, among the poorer classes, they shew every disposition to assist and relieve each other.”

“The clergy, who have great influence over the lower classes, exert themselves much to cultivate the good feeling which subsists among them towards one another.”<sup>r</sup>

The account from the Azores is, that

“Mendicity is limited to the aged and infirm, the crippled, and the blind; for whom there is no legal provision. They are therefore dependent on the charity of the wealthy; to whom they make a weekly application, and receive alms.

“The poorest able-bodied labourer abhors begging. His utmost exertions are therefore employed to support himself and family. It is only in cases of sickness, or other corporeal impediment, that he ever has recourse to alms.

<sup>r</sup> Senior's Foreign Poor-laws, pp. 190-192.

“In general there prevails much love and affection between parents and children, and from the children much obedience and respect towards their parents; to which they are exhorted by the clergy, who inculcate great subjection to their parents on all occasions.”<sup>s</sup>

Of the Canary Islands the description is similar :—

“Mendicity prevails to a considerable extent. There is no legal provision whatever. Casual charity is the only resource; but as the natives for the most part remain in the places where they were born, there are very few who have not some relations and acquaintances from whom they receive occasional assistance.

“Cripples, deaf, dumb, and blind, live with their parents or relations, or subsist by casual charity. There is no provision for them.

“The peasantry are a robust and hardy

<sup>s</sup> Senior's Foreign Poor-laws, pp. 196-198.

race, laborious and frugal. There is a great deal of family affection among them.”<sup>t</sup>

In Greece there exists no public institution or decree organising the relief to the poor. There are scarcely any charitable institutions, it having been feared that the Ottoman authorities would appropriate to themselves any resources which might be set apart for the poor. Charitable subscriptions are therefore the only means by which the poor, sick, &c., obtain relief.

The effects of this system upon the conduct and character of the people themselves is thus described :—

“The nearest relations of orphans generally consider it to be a religious duty to take care of them ; so that, in consequence of this praiseworthy feeling, they are seldom left entirely destitute, unless they have no relations, or unless the latter have no means of assistance at their disposal. Moreover, there are numerous benevolent persons who are in the habit of taking orphans into their

<sup>t</sup> Senior's Foreign Poor-laws, pp. 199-201.



houses, and bringing them up at their own expense.”

“The labourers are industrious, frugal, and attached to their relations.”<sup>u</sup>

The concurrent testimony of a friend who lately visited Greece, is entirely confirmatory of this statement. He describes the character of the people as most amiable, and their conduct towards each other as most exemplary; relations constantly assisting one another with the greatest affection, disinterestedness, and liberality.

The labours and inquiries of Dr. Chalmers have furnished abundant corroboration of the position which I am supporting, from those parts and parishes in Scotland where the Christian system of poor-relief prevails, as compared with the compulsory system. I shall reserve the details of his information for an appendix to this chapter, because they are too numerous to be inserted here, and too important to be dismissed hastily; and because it will be necessary to explain,

<sup>u</sup> Senior's Foreign Poor-laws, pp. 202, 208.



at some length, the experiments which he has originated in promotion of this very system of relief, and their results; and to make some observations upon them. I will only quote one general description here, which expresses the result of his observations.

“My impression certainly is, that in the unassessed county of Fife, where I was afterwards a clergyman for twelve years, the standard of enjoyment is fully as high as in Roxburgshire; and the relative affections seem to be in much more powerful exercise in the unassessed than in the assessed parishes; as also the kindness of neighbours to each other, and the spontaneous generosity of the rich to the poor. There is a great deal of relief going on in the unassessed parishes, perhaps as much in point of *matériel* as in the assessed; though not so much needed, from the unbroken habits of economy and industry among the people. The *morale* which accompanies the voluntary mode of relief, tends to sweeten and

cement the parochial society in the unas-  
sessed parishes.”<sup>v</sup>

I cannot refrain from adding some passages from the evidence taken by the Commissioners of Inquiry respecting the condition of the poor in Ireland, and their feelings and opinions in regard to charitable relief, previous to the enactment which recently gave to the poor of that country a legal resource and establishment. Much contradictory evidence was sought after and eagerly received, and will be found in the report. The report itself admits the greater mutual charity of the Irish poor, as compared with the English, and expressly attributes it to the non-existence of poor-laws.<sup>w</sup>

<sup>v</sup> Evidence before the Committee of the House of Commons, on the subject of a Poor-law for Ireland, 1830. Question 36. Chalmers' Works, vol. xvi. p. 296.

<sup>w</sup> Poor-Inquiry (Ireland), appendix G. Report on the state of the Irish Poor in Great Britain, pp. 25, 26. Dr. Chalmers' Evidence. Question 271. Works, vol. xvi. p. 388.

But whether the following extracts may be considered faithful as a general description or not, they are full of instruction; and whencesoever drawn, ought to be noticed, and must give rise to serious thought and reflection. I believe them to present a faithful picture; at least, the recurrence of such evidence is frequent and constant in that part of the report which is entitled “Vagrancy,” that is, mendicity, and is especially devoted to the subject of beggary and almsgiving; and many more quotations might have been added to the same purpose. It is also wonderfully corroborative of the description of the poorer classes given in the last chapter.

*Province of Connaught, County Galway.*  
—“The support of the vagrant falls principally on the small farmer and shopkeeper, though all classes contribute something. The farmer and shopkeeper are more open to the vagrant than the richer classes are.—  
*Manseragh St. George, Esq., Headford Castle.* The beggar calls oftener at the poor

man's house than at the rich man's, and is oftener sent away empty by the rich.—*William King*. The rich give rather to certain known objects than to common vagrants.—*Dr. Kelly*. The poorer classes give away more, in proportion to their means, than the rich do. The charity of the richer classes is exerted more in employing more workmen than they require, than in giving alms.—*Mr. St. George*. The poor give ten times as much as the rich in proportion to their means.—*Dr. Kelly*. Persons renting only one acre, and even day-labourers, give relief to the poor, if they have it.”—*Mr. St. George*.

“Persons have, I believe, often given away in the earlier part of the year so much as to leave themselves afterwards in want.—*Mr. St. George*. I have known poor persons who were buying provisions to give more away than the persons from whom they bought.”—*Mr. J. Lynch, postmaster*.

“I consider that I would be in greater want if I gave none away, than if I gave a

great deal away; for *I think that charity never shortens the quantity.*—*William King.* If a meal was going on, and a beggar called, you would never miss what you would give away. I gave away myself part of the cake made of a quart of meal to a beggarman, and at the time I had no more victuals in my house, nor the hope of getting it to earn the next day; *but I hoped that as God gave it to me that day, He would give me some more the next day.*”—*William King.*<sup>x</sup>

*County Roscommon.*—“Considering what they endure from privations and want, it can scarcely be believed that any beg, unless when forced to it by downright necessity. The people feel a spirit in themselves that keeps them from asking alms, and the poor housekeeper is poorer than the beggar.”—*William Murray, miller.*<sup>y</sup>

“I saw a very poor creature, who happened to have collected more food than she

<sup>x</sup> Selections from Evidence given on the Irish-Poor Inquiry, pp. 283, 284.

<sup>y</sup> Ibid. p. 299.

actually wanted for the day's subsistence, give away to another, who seemed, if possible, more wretched than herself, as much potatoes as is usually given at a time at a farmer's house to a beggar; but I believe such cases to be very rare indeed."—*Macnamara, weaver.*<sup>z</sup>

"The fear of imprecations may possibly have some effect upon old and superstitious people, but certainly has no influence on the great mass of the people, who are disposed to give without such motives."—*J. Kelly, farmer.*<sup>a</sup>

*Province of Munster, County Clare.*—

"The country people generally give lodgings for nothing to those going to England for work. But in the villages they are obliged to pay twopence for their beds."<sup>b</sup>

"Being asked, if they would agree, instead of giving potatoes to beggars, to throw the same quantity aside every day into a vessel, and send the whole, at the end of the

<sup>z</sup> Evidence on Irish-Poor Inquiry, p. 302.

<sup>a</sup> Ibid. p. 306.

<sup>b</sup> Ibid. p. 355.

quarter, to an institution where those beggars would be supported, they objected to this also. One says, '*I would rather have the gratification of giving them to the poor myself.*' Another says, 'The wife would never come in to it, or any woman in the parish.'

"Religion has a great influence in producing the habits of giving charity. Even if a house of industry were established, some persons would continue to relieve beggars as they do now, but the practice would be gradually discontinued. Daniel Sullivan says, 'If there were a poor-house, they would not give as they do now; we would say more against it, because they would have something else to depend on. We do it for the good of our soul, but it would not be so great a charity then.' Being asked, whether he might not be induced to give charity for fear of the beggar's curse, the same witness observes, 'It is not for their cursing I would give it. If I knew myself I was doing right, I would not care what



they said. But they do not curse or scold, poor creatures, excepting the buccoughs.”<sup>c</sup>

*County Limerick.*—“ Mr. Furlong remarked, that *people look out for beggars to give them alms*, for the benefit of their own souls, on the principle, that ‘ giving to the poor is lending to the Lord.’ Almsgiving from a religious feeling, he thought, would not be checked by a poor-law; but almsgiving from a desire to relieve want, he thought, would.”<sup>d</sup>

*County Donegal.*—“ Frequent cases have been known of vagrants giving or lending provisions to the housekeepers with whom they have lodged. Mr. M’Guirly, R. C. C., gives a striking instance, which came under his own observation, of the family of a poor labourer, who died of consumption, having been supported, without going out, during the greater part of the summer, by a beggarman with three children, who used to lodge with him.

<sup>c</sup> Evidence on Irish-Poor Inquiry, p. 375.

<sup>d</sup> Ibid. p. 389.

“To relieve the wandering beggar is considered, by the poorest class, as one of the first religious duties. They never inquire into the causes of his being so; and they have a feeling that before long it may be their own case.

“Susan M'Lafferty, a blind beggarwoman, says, ‘that the middling houses are as good as the rich ones; and often much better. A good gouping (three to six potatoes, or a handful of meal, &c.) is always sure to the beggar from the poorest farmer.’ And Kitty Hegarthy, a poor widow beggarwoman, states, ‘I always find the poor man’s door open; and his hand is never backward, when there is aught in the creel.’”

“John Boyd, Esq., says, ‘I am not favourable to poor-laws. I think the intercourse at present subsisting between the poor and those who assist and relieve them, is calculated to promote a kindly feeling, and further the objects of religion and morality, and a spirit of charity.’”<sup>e</sup>

<sup>e</sup> Evidence on Irish-Poor Inquiry, pp. 411, 412.

“ Mr. Robert Ramsay, farmer, says, ‘ I think the poor-laws would make paupers of us all.’”<sup>g</sup>

In the opinion of the Rev. William Spratt, a dissenting minister, “ The predominating feeling which induces the small farmers to give alms, is a belief that charity is a duty, the neglect of which would entail misfortunes both here and hereafter. It is even believed, that the feeling among that class of persons is so strong on the point, that they would not consider themselves relieved from the claims of charity by the establishment of places of refuge for the poor.”<sup>h</sup>

The most striking feature which presents itself throughout the whole of this evidence, both from foreign countries, and from Scotland and Ireland, is the exuberance of kind, and affectionate, and disinterested feeling among relations, and between the poor and rich, and among the poor themselves, which wells forth from, and fertilises the soil in

<sup>g</sup> Evidence on Irish-Poor Inquiry, p. 413.

<sup>h</sup> Ibid. p. 414.

every country which is not sterilised and rendered unfruitful of charity by the existence of poor-laws, or that which gives occasion for them.

The next striking point is, the possibility of the existence of warm and liberal feelings, and the unrestrained fruits of them, without their becoming wasteful and excessive ; and consistently with the non-increase, and even with the diminution, of mendicancy.

Another most important conclusion is, that all this freedom in giving, and exuberance of feeling, is altogether compatible with order and arrangement in the administration ; and this appetite for giving and searching out of objects, with the most perfect adaptation, the wisest and most cautious application, and the finest, truest, and most experienced touch of tenderness and sympathy.

The most important point of all is the prominent part which religion acts in giving motives to and directing the liberality which

we have exhibited in these instances. The clergy are a chief instrument in drawing forth the funds, and in giving a proper application to them.

It is evident that the Church is the best and most efficient power to give effect and direction to charity in general—to become the mainspring and regulator of almsgiving and receiving. I do not enter at present into particulars, or the distinction between public collections and contributions, and private, and individual, and personal kindnesses and benefactions. These must have their different modes and operations. But they may be one in spirit and principle. They must both exist together; and they may well concur and co-operate together. The spirit and counsel of the Church may direct both. The clergy alone can hold that communication, and have that influence with all the parts of society concerned in the great work and business of almsgiving, which can enable them to direct each in the due performance of their respec-

tive parts. Whether they administer or not any considerable part of the funds with their own hands, they alone can most effectually open the fountains of benevolence, and make them flow more abundantly when occasion calls for it; they alone can best instil the principle which should guide these overflowing streams into their proper channels; they alone, from making it their business, and by their experience, can best point out in practice the ultimate objects and destination; they alone can prepare the recipients to ask and to accept the proffered alms upon the right motives and principle, and not to ask and to refuse them when the necessity does not justify it. Under the hand and guidance of the Church all is liberal, all is well applied, all is well arranged, orderly, and suitable. In the language of Mr. Wilberforce, in his *Essay on the Parochial System*,<sup>i</sup> “The benevolence of Christians should be wise, well-ordered, discriminating, and bountiful. Such are the alms of

<sup>i</sup> *Parochial System*, p. 41.

the Church: ennobling to the giver, but not debasing to the receiver; because the love of Christ towards men becomes the effectual source and motive, the model and example of the love of men towards their brethren.”<sup>j</sup>

See the appendix to this chapter.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### *Treatment of the Poor.*

MODERN MAXIMS OF CHARITY—THEIR FAILURE—  
LITTLE CHARITY IN ENGLAND—FOREIGN HOSPITALS—ENGLISH CHARITY—ITS AMOUNT—ITS CHARACTERISTICS—ITS SEVERITY—ITS FALLACY—ITS REMEDIES—DIVINE AND HUMAN WISDOM—FALSE PRINCIPLES, AND CONSEQUENT EVILS—CHRISTIAN CHARITY—THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS—JOHN HALES—LAW—SIR THOMAS BROWN—THE JEWS—MAIMONIDES—CHARITY IN FRANCE—OUT-DOOR RELIEF IN FRANCE—THE PRINCIPLE AND MOTIVE CHIEFLY IMPORTANT—THE POOR, WANT ATTENTION AND A FRIEND—CLASSES ARE DISUNITED—SOCIETY DISJOINTED—SYMPTOMS OF OLD AGE—IRRESPONSIBLE PROPERTY—THE DISEASE DESPERATE—THE COUNTRY GENTLEMAN—THE OLD SQUIRE.

“WHAT is your rule for giving charity?”

“The word of God says, ‘Give to every one that asketh thee;’ and I know no other law.”

“No, sir, I cannot go with you there. I have agreed with you hitherto, and upon

every other topic ; but I can never admit this."

The gentleman who made this answer was a religious man, and a man of sense, and one who looked with alarm and horror upon the principles by which the world is at present governed.

The word and law of God is openly denied in every particular. And when it is boldly challenged, as it is, even by the most religious and scrupulous, what hope can there be against the continued rise of the flood of infidelity, by which the whole Christian world is about to be overwhelmed ?

But let us forget the truth of God's word for the present, and admire man's wisdom and his practice, and his own opinion of it ; for it is very great ! God has said, " Give to every one that asketh ;" and, " Be temperate and frugal ;" and, " Lay not up treasure ;" and, " Woe be to the rich." But let us forget this.

Man says, " Never give to any one in the streets ; all the beggars you meet with

are impostors and criminals. It is a crime to beg; and all the charity you give them only makes them idle and worse: you are a partaker in their criminality. It is a crime to give. The greater part of what is given in charity does more harm than good: it fosters vice and idleness: it prevents a man from exerting himself; for all which you are answerable. Some few cases there are which may be better for a little assistance; but these cases are rare, and most of them doubtful. If you have thoroughly investigated and ascertained such a case, why then you may give to it freely; but never give any thing without thorough inquiry. Give once, and have done with it. Never give in dribblets; assist effectually, or not at all. If you cannot inquire, give nothing; for there are ten chances to one that it is an imposture. In the meantime, make as much as you can, that these burdens may fall lighter. The riches of a country are its prosperity. Educate the poor, for this reason, in order that they may be rich; that

they may be able to support themselves, and so be off your hands. Teach them by all means to save; saving is the greatest virtue. They must not depend upon their children in their old age, nor upon one another, but upon themselves. You must force them to save, by shewing that they have no resource in you. You must make as much, and give as little as you can.

“ For this purpose, you ought not to restrict the education even of the lowest pauper in any particular. You must give him the utmost amount of learning that you can,—an education equal to or beyond those who are able to pay for their own schooling; you may fill his mind to cramming. But as for food and clothing,—as regards the health and strength of the body—that strength by which he ploughs and reaps, and that health by which he endures the inclement seasons,—as to these, the supply must be measured by the means of the ordinary labouring man; the supply must not be equal to his, but below it; and the line of support to the body

is to be drawn just above the point of starvation.”<sup>a</sup>

O admirable wisdom ! O sublime policy ! Oh, the depth and knowledge of our later ancestors, who spoliated what our earlier forefathers had dedicated to charity and the Church, and made so wise and just a legal provision instead, by which the poor have secured to them all those blessings of human design and forethought, so sure to diminish poverty, in lieu of the ill effects of charity given upon mere Christian principles ;—and, lo, England, in the meantime, is the most pauperised country in the world.<sup>b</sup>

But these being our principles, what, on

<sup>a</sup> Dr. Kay’s Report on Education to the Poor-law Commissioners ; First Report of Poor-law Commissioners, p. 228. “ Policy without religion draws the line of support just above the point of starvation.” —REV. THOMAS DALE’S *Sermon for Greville-Street Hospital*, 1839, p. 10.

<sup>b</sup> “ England is the most pauperised country in Europe” (Dr. KAY’S *Report to the Poor-law Commissioners, Fourth Poor-law Report*, p. 230) ; and if of Europe, then obviously of the world.

the other hand, is our practice? What, in the first place, is our boast?

Whatever be our reasoning, our practice at least is generous. This is our boast. England is the most charitable nation in the world! It is a country in which suffering is sure to meet with adequate and immediate relief. Distress has but to make itself known, and the charitable sympathies of the benevolent public are only too warmly enlisted, and contributions are sure to pour in, in abundant and overflowing streams. And look at the ample and adequate provisions of public beneficence! First, there is that noble legal provision of the poor-law, more extensive and perfect than in any other country, and declaring by act of parliament that no man shall die of hunger; thereby stamping this kingdom and its constitution as essentially Christian. But let us look around on the hospitals, and infirmaries, and foundations for education and reformation, which meet our eyes whichever way we turn, especially in this vast and noble



metropolis. In these, every form of human suffering is anticipated, and amply provided for. There Christianity shews itself in its purest shape, and under its purest motives. There the poor are equalised with the rich ; for there the greatest learning and skill of the age are provided, and wait gratuitously upon the meanest and lowest conditions of suffering humanity. There the lame man is made daily to leap as the hart—the blind man to see plainly—the deaf and the dumb to hear and speak—the diseased and maimed to rise from their bed ; and so the blessings of Christ's presence are showered down and dispersed abroad with a never-failing beneficence, in this most pure and holy seat of Christian doctrine, worship, and practice.

We will not dwell upon the establishment of hospitals as schools of medicine, and for other such motives ; or on charities instituted to give employment as secretary to some worthy unoccupied individual. These things are the merest exceptions, and are most rare,



no doubt. We will not particularly notice, that charitable foundations were five times as numerous when the country was less rich, and previous to the sweeping and cleansing of the Augean Church, from motives the most pure and disinterested, and most wholly unaugéan ! These things are not directly to our present purpose.

This country is the most uncharitable country in the world. The sums that we give in charity are a mere pittance, and are shameful to the name of Christian ; though pretty well for a nation governed, as this is, entirely upon heathen principles. The state of the poor is the greatest disgrace to humanity—let alone the name of Christian, which we profess—that ever has existed since the world began. The separation and estrangement of the richer orders from the poorer is indescribably greater in this country, which professes the religion that makes all men brethren, than it ever was in any country professedly or practically heathen—except, perhaps, in Rome in her most palmy period ;

that is, when she was over-ripe, and growing rotten, and tottering, as we now are, to our fall. We say nothing, too, of America, which is only the realisation of every English vice and principle in a more advanced state, and in greater intensity, and under the doom of a heavier and more certain ruin.

We boast that distress is sure to be relieved as soon as known ; but we take especial pains that we should seldom know it. An exaggerated case in a newspaper, or an advertisement for an hospital, or even a very severe winter, may make us draw our purse-strings to the extent of one or two guineas subscription, or a twenty-guineas life-donation ; and so we remain satisfied for the rest of the season, or for our lives, with the self-flattery that we have done a noble and a Christian action, and have felt our hearts expand with benevolence when we have seen our name published in the list of contributors. But as for all the misery and starvation, and intense suffering and wretchedness, which crowd the courts and alleys

around us, within a hundred yards of our kitchens, and at all seasons, these we never see, and never hear of, and of these we know nothing; and we take especial care that we shall never know, for we would not enter or approach such places, or come near such people, lest we should be infected. We would not talk to them in passing: that would be out of place and vulgar, and might teach them to be familiar, or encourage them to beg; and if they come out and beg, and force themselves upon our notice, why, then, they are impostors, “for the really distressed are always ashamed to beg;” “and, besides, they ought to go to their parish.”

England is the most uncharitable country in the world. What we give in charity is a perfect pittance. What ought this country to give in proportion to its riches? and what proportion does it give?

Our great boast is our numerous and munificent hospitals. Even in infidel France, where the monasteries and other foundations were spoliated during the Revolution, as in

England at the Reformation, the hospitals in Paris are so extensive, that, in 1838, there were admitted into them, of sick persons, 75,305 in-patients — each of whom remained, upon an average, about twenty-five days, — out of a population of 899,343. (In 1837 there were admitted 76,887.) Into the London hospitals, for a population of 1,800,000,<sup>c</sup> there were admitted in the same year about 37,000. The same proportion as in Paris would have been upwards of 150,000. The above numbers shew, that in Paris there are upwards of 5000 hospital-beds constantly occupied.<sup>d</sup> In London (including the lunatic asylums, and Hanwell Asylum, established by act of parliament, which is for the whole of Middlesex,) there were, in the same year,

<sup>c</sup> It is computed that at this time, March 1840, the population of London is 1,950,000; and that at the next census, in 1841, it will be upwards of two millions. These numbers are most likely exaggerated.

<sup>d</sup> Planta states them to be 15,000. But this includes foundling hospitals, and other charities in the nature of almshouses.

4500 hospital-beds, and less than 4200 in use.<sup>e</sup>

At Nantes the *Hôtel Dieu* contains 600

\* Hospital-beds, and average number of patients :—

1838.	No. of beds.	Occu- pied.
Guy's Hospital . . . . .	530	510
St. Bartholomew's . . . . .	500	491
St. Thomas's . . . . .	400	395
London . . . . .	320	317
St. George's . . . . .	320	313
Seamen's . . . . .	240	250
Convalescents . . . . .	60	
Middlesex Hospital . . . . .	235	225
Westminster . . . . .	127	120
University College . . . . .	121	110
Charing Cross . . . . .	104	100
Fever (1837) . . . . .	60	21
Small-pox . . . . .	35	30
Lock . . . . .	80	80
Greville Street . . . . .	20	18
Hanwell Lunatic Asylum (for Mid- dlesex—1839) . . . . .	810	791
Bethlem Lunatic Asylum . . . . .	240	229
St. Luke's Lunatic Asylum . . . . .	300	193
King's Coll. Hosp. (not then estab.)		
	4502	4193

beds; 300 of which are for the inhabitants of the city, being one bed to about 290 persons: the population being 87,191.

At Bourdeaux the hospital contains from 600 to 650 sick. Supposing half the number to belong to the town, this is about the same proportion to the population, which is 109,467.<sup>f</sup>

The beds in the hospitals in London are as one to 400 persons, including the Hanwell Asylum for all Middlesex, and the Seamen's Hospital. But the London hospitals are occupied by country patients, as well as those of Nantes and Bourdeaux; so that the disproportion is even much greater.

The magnificence and great extent of the hospital at Lyons, *La Charité*, is generally well known; but I have not obtained the particulars respecting it. Reichard calls it of "amazing extent." The population is 109,000.<sup>g</sup>

<sup>f</sup> Senior's Foreign Poor-laws, pp. 165, 173.

<sup>g</sup> At Rome there are 2154 beds for patients in two of the hospitals alone, those of *Santo Spirito* and of



Let us look at the rest of the comparison. The French are very averse to going into a workhouse, and out-door relief is given to the fallen with a liberal hand, and for the *Our Blessed Saviour*. The population is 130,000 or 150,000. (*Orthodox Journal* for Aug. 1840.)

In Naples there are sixty charitable foundations very richly endowed; viz. seven hospitals; thirty receptacles for foundlings and orphans; five banks for loans and savings; the rest are schools or confraternities. (BURN'S *Poor-law in Scotland and on the Continent*, p. 466.)

In Cadiz there are three hospitals for sick, in one of which are 6000 patients. (*Ibid.* p. 467.)

Having heard it remarked that the foreign hospitals are less commodious, I have made inquiry, and find the contrary to be the case. Even the degree of cleanliness is not deficient, in proportion to the habits of the people. I subjoin one reply which I received from a friend, an architect, because it is short and comprehensive; and his attention has been especially directed to the commodiousness of the hospitals on the continent.

“ I saw very little of the Paris hospitals; but at Lyons I saw a very extensive one. The point that struck me most was the four great wards, forming the arms of a transept, in the centre of which stood the



following Christian reason: "It is much more gratifying to the poor sick or infirm man to be assisted at his own home, and to receive there the attentions of his wife and children, or relations, than to be in a man-high altar; so that all the patients in those, the principal wards, see the mass celebrated every day.

"At Genoa is a very fine hospital, of which I could shew you the plan.

"At Florence are several very fine establishments of this kind, for sick, for insane, &c.; but the finest is for the foundling children, within which is a school for midwives.

"At Rome the hospitals are both numerous and very large. There is one for cutaneous disorders entirely. The most celebrated is, I think, that of *Spirito Santo*, in Transtevere.

"But it is at Naples that institutions of this kind appeared to me to have reached the highest point of perfection, in regard to commodiousness, cleanliness, attendance, order, classification, and every other requisite.

"I remember, in one, seeing two boys, who had been operated upon for the stone, put in a large airy room (this was in summer), without any other inmate, that they might be quite quiet.

"In the same building I saw another large room,

ner isolated, when placed in a poor-house, amidst individuals who are not bound to him by any tie either of blood or of friendship.”<sup>h</sup> The number relieved at their own dwellings in 1838 was 58,500. The same proportion for London would be 97,500. The average number is 28,432, as nearly as can be calculated. This number ought to be multiplied by 2, to embrace the different individuals relieved at different seasons. Three times the number would be 85,296. The in-door poor in Paris in 1838 were 12,945. The average in London is 14,450, which ought to be multiplied like the last. The in-door poor, therefore, are more numerous than in

over the door of which was written ‘*Incurabili* ;’ there were only two inmates at that time.

“ The first thing that strikes in foreign hospitals generally is their extent, and the abundance of space, light, and air, in them ; the next is the fulness of the attendance ; and the third the presence of religious feeling which enters into all belonging to them.”

The Lock Hospital in London is now rebuilding upon a very moderate scale, for want of sufficient funds.

<sup>h</sup> Official Report of Relief in Paris, 1838.

Paris, but not so as to make up the disproportion. And what is the amount of the relief given? In food alone, in the poor-houses—in the hospitals it is more—the daily cost is sixpence a day sterling per head, or 3*s.* 6*d.* per week, which is equal to 5*s.* in England.<sup>i</sup> The allowance in London poor-houses is under 2*s.*<sup>j</sup>

England is the least charitable country in all the world. What ought to be given in this country in proportion to its riches? and what proportion is given?

A Christian man would not give less than a tenth of his income, as a general rule, though no rule or limit can really be applied to Christian benevolence.<sup>k</sup> Many, of course, as those without family or incumbrance, would give a much greater propor-

<sup>i</sup> Official Report on the Hospitals, Poor-houses, and Poor-relief in Paris, during the year 1838.

<sup>j</sup> See the dietaries published by the Poor-law Commissioners. It is the same in parishes not brought under their jurisdiction.

<sup>k</sup> See the laws of the Mosaic code, and the practice of the Jews upon this subject, *ante*, p. 208. The Mahomedan law enjoins the giving away of one-sixth.

tion. Those who have large families might give less. But something must be taken as a basis of comparison; and if one-tenth of the income of the country were to be given up in charity, perhaps that might afford some symptom of the adoption of Christian rule in the country, and a hope of Christian progress. As pauperism obviously increases with the increase and accumulation of riches, a larger proportion of our enormous wealth ought to be given here than elsewhere.

What amount, then, is given in charity in England? Five hundred thousand pounds? A million? Two millions? Five millions?<sup>k</sup> Let it be taken at five millions, if any one can find a ground of calculation upon which such an amount may be estimated. Mr. M'Queen estimates the income of Great Britain and Ireland at 722 millions.<sup>1</sup> What proportion

<sup>k</sup> The Bishop of Chester estimates the private charity at five millions; but he does not state any grounds.—*Sermons on Christian Charity*, Preface.

<sup>1</sup> General Statistics of the British Empire, p. 218. This estimate is the more probable, because the in-

does the charity of the country bear to this amount? Very little faith is to be placed in statistics; therefore I do not pretend to certainty. Here is enough, however, to make it difficult to believe that one-tenth part is given in charity of the amount which might fairly be expected in a Christian country. Adding that portion of the poor-rates which goes to the poor, it would scarcely be a seventh. Taking the minimum estimate, or one-tenth, as the sufficient contribution to the poor and the clergy together, and for all religious purposes, we contribute, perhaps, voluntarily and compulsorily, fifteen millions upon the whole, or about one-fifth of what ought to be given.

Let us look at it in another point of view. Compare the lists of wealthy men in London with the lists of contributors to public charities. If we take the Court Guide and the lists of the principal and best supported charities, where we find fifty houses

come of France has been estimated at ten milliards of francs, or 400 millions sterling.

in a street, we shall find subscriptions perhaps to the amount of fifty guineas among them, and these fifty guineas subscribed by very few individuals. The occupiers of these houses have between them not less than 100,000*l.* income, perhaps 200,000*l.* Many of them give two or three guineas a year to London charities, and probably very little besides. A much larger number subscribe nothing at all; and a very small number give liberally and handsomely; perhaps one, more than might have been expected of him.

Or take fifty names alphabetically, and take the same names in the subscriptions to charities, the same result will be obtained. The greater number of subscriptions are by persons whose names are not elevated to the Court Guide. But though these give more freely than the others, yet they give nothing as compared with the rule which has been proposed. The richer give less in proportion; the richest give least.<sup>m</sup> The fact is,

<sup>m</sup> The liberality in alms-giving is in an inverse proportion to the wealth of the contributors. Persons of



we are too rich to be liberal. The richer people grow, the poorer they become in practice; the less they give, and the less they can give, and the less they can do. The rich are too poor to marry. The rich are too poor to be hospitable. The rich are too poor to take a loss with resignation and

the smallest independent fortunes give their guineas to charities, and the proprietors of thousands a year in general give no more.

The most striking feature in the giving of charity is, the very small number of persons who give at all. The rector of a large and populous parish in London says, from his own experience, that the number who give to charities at all is incomparably few. Those who do give, give largely, even beyond what might be expected of them; but they are a mere nothing in number. This is the general experience of all secretaries and collectors for charities. They generally know beforehand who will respond to an application, and often the amount nearly which each person will contribute.

In a wealthy parish in London, of 22,000 inhabitants, a rental of 113,000*l.*, and a probable income of one million, the Visiting Society and the Infant Schools are supported by 111 families and 121 persons; of which fifty-five contributed, in 1839, 1 guinea, or under,



cheerfulness. The rich are too poor to be charitable. Thus, in this country of enormous wealth and prosperity—in which, as in all other places, pauperism increases with riches, and consequently a larger proportion subscription; seventeen, from 1 to 2 guineas; six, 5 guineas; one, 10 guineas, besides a 5-guinea donation; fourteen gave a donation of 1 guinea or under; twelve gave from that to 5 guineas; three, 10 guineas; one, 20 guineas; one gave 5 guineas donation and 2 subscription; one, 7 donation, and 2 subscription; and one gave 20 guineas donation, and 3 guineas subscription.

Another principal feature in charities is, the vast proportion which is given by the clergy, notwithstanding the inadequacy of their stipends. It is reckoned that two-thirds of the subscribers to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge are clergymen, between a fourth and a third of those who subscribe to the National Society, and half the subscribers to the different diocesan associations for education. These charities are peculiar; but they are some of the largest subscriptions.

The statement by the secretary of the National Society, dated Sept. 14, 1840, after exemplifying the extraordinary liberality of the clergy, proceeds in this manner:—"A distressing contrast to this self-denying zeal of the clergy is too frequently presented in the

of our accumulations ought to be set apart for charity—in this enormously wealthy country, we are too poor to be charitable; we are too poor and selfish to raise our revenue, and to pay our public debts; we cannot afford to build churches, or maintain

apathy and misplaced economy of their parishioners. There are some gratifying and even splendid exceptions; but in too many instances it is quite disheartening to read the pitifulness of the sum that even in extensive parishes and wealthy neighbourhoods is all that can be raised, either to build a school, or to pay a teacher. A very large proportion, and in some instances the whole of the expense, is borne by the parochial minister. Too many letters declare that manufacturers give nothing; that landlords give almost nothing; and that farmers confine their bounty to the cartage of materials.”

The last report of the Metropolis Churches' Fund also has the following passage:—“At the same time the committee must honestly avow their great disappointment at the comparatively small number of the contributors. The fund placed at their disposal has been chiefly raised by large contributions from a few; and they cannot but lament that the appeal of the bishop of the diocese to its wealthier inhabitants for

a clergy sufficient for the people; we are forced to encourage a trade in poison for other nations, and to suffer every demoralising habit and luxury that can contribute to the revenue among ourselves. Oh, admirable prosperity! Oh, Christian country!

the means of supplying an obvious and pressing want has as yet awakened so few of the large landed proprietors, merchants, and others, who are drawing immense wealth from the increase of the metropolitan population, to the *bounden duty* which rests upon them to care for the spiritual wants of those who contribute to their temporal interests."

Some increase of liberality must be acknowledged, with thankfulness to God, in the last two or three years, and especially some few munificent contributions to particular objects; but still the characteristic is, the very few persons who give liberally, and the sums raised are as mere drops compared with the ocean of our riches. The great object is, not to draw more from those who already give freely—though these are always the persons most influenced by any new appeal—but to increase the number of contributors to charitable objects. The above extracts correctly describe the general state and character of charity in the country, and especially in the metropolis.

Oh, paradise of the devil and his angels—where to Mammon and his golden image he has given his seat—inviting and about to suffer the self-chosen and self-inflicted torments of outer darkness and hell.

In this paradise of Satan, people dare not be charitable, people dare not do their duty. A custom existed at a mansion house in Sussex, of giving a penny to every traveller who applied for it, which was supposed to have been begun at the suppression of monasteries. This custom, which led to no inconvenience some hundreds of years ago, when the penny was of a value three or four times as great as at present, has been changed into the practice of giving a penny roll, because the penny was an inducement to come from far and wide, and brought numbers of persons for whom it was never intended. At another house, in the same county, the practice of giving bread was established, but of necessity discontinued, from the very great numbers that it brought together.

The Mendicity Society in London does as much as the state of its funds will permit. But in order to keep within its income, it is forced to adopt such strict and narrow rules of relief, that numberless really distressing cases are quite ineffectually assisted ; and the great majority of applicants are scarcely more than kept temporarily just above starvation. Yet for these very imperfect and limited operations the Society is often complained of by practical men and philosophers of the modern school, because they encourage people by their liberality to emigrate to London from all parts of the kingdom.

The Refuge for the Houseless opens its doors during the severe weather in winter, and affords an asylum to those who must otherwise sleep in the streets, and those who prefer their entertainment to paying fourpence for a private lodging and a bed. Each man lies on the floor, in a compartment about eighteen inches wide, partitioned off from his neighbour by a board nine

inches or a foot high. This box, about the size of a coffin, is strewed with straw. A piece of bread is given in the evening, and again in the morning. This establishment, which is not opened till the severe weather sets in, is complained of by thousands in London—parish officers, rate-payers, officers of other charities, philanthropists, and philosophers—because it occasions, by its lavish and extravagant and misguided hospitality, an annual emigration of the poor from all parts to London for the purpose of taking advantage of their culpable liberality!

The parish officers frighten away the timid by their manner:—to those who would come into the workhouse they offer a small pittance out of it; to those who will not come in, they offer the house; to those who have a settlement in a distant parish, and want only present relief, they offer to pass them, because it would be ruin to them to accept it. And one parish cannot be much more lenient than the rest; for if they were to relax their illiberality, all the poor of



other parishes would directly flock together to them.

There are some few parishes near the metropolis which have for a long time been more burdened by the poor than others, because they have had resident in them several wealthy and charitable individuals.

What conclusions are to be drawn from these and other such facts? Most plainly these, it will be said: that by increased liberality you only increase mendicity; and that if you go on extending your bountiful system, and make that general which has been locally so injurious where it happens to have been tried, you will soon pauperise and make beggars of the whole kingdom.

The conclusions which I draw from them are directly the reverse. I see no reason for supposing that these parishes, or charities, or individuals, have gone at all beyond their duty; but I conclude, that all other places and individuals who have followed a different rule and practice have grossly failed in theirs.



What must be the condition of the poor in this country, when a penny or a piece of bread will bring people from far and near, and make their applications most inconveniently numerous? What must the real state of poverty be, when all kinds of shifts must be resorted to, to prevent the numbers from being overwhelming which would apply for the miserable pittance which the poor-law provides and the hospitality of an English workhouse? What must be the state of the poor, and the measure of charity in the provinces generally, when a bed of loose straw eighteen inches wide, in company with sixty or a hundred other persons lying upon the floor of the same apartment, and two pieces of bread, and this during an uncertain and limited season, will cause the poor for a hundred miles round to flock together to London? Truly this England is a country pre-eminently charitable!

But this country is not like other countries. In this country the gaining a livelihood is so difficult, competition is so great,

and the rate of remuneration is so small, it is so difficult even to obtain employment, that we must act on different principles; the poor must be compelled by greater strictness and severity to exert themselves, and they must be starved into the necessity for straining every nerve and sinew, before it becomes justifiable to give them any assistance.

True enough, this country is continually increasing in its difficulties and miseries, with every increase in its riches, and so-called prosperity. But because the selfishness, and worldliness, and madness of the rich, dispose them to more and more rapid accumulation, to the increase of their own misery, and their own temporal and eternal ruin, is this any reason whatever why the poor should suffer the consequences for their sakes, and their duties and obligations to the poor be altered or diminished? Surely, if they have procured an advantage, as they think it, they might perceive it to be just that, at least, the poor man should not be curtailed of his former advantages for the

sake of their improved circumstances, but rather that he should partake more largely and liberally of what must now be their superabundance and superfluity. But no! though all the difficulties of living are increased to the poor man by the greater accumulation of wealth, yet the rich, who are the cause of this, and who reap the supposed advantages, are able to call less their own, are able to spare less,—whether from increased demands and difficulties, or increased selfishness,—the moral and worldly fetters which Mammon entwines around his worshippers,—and the nervelessness and disinclination to shake them off with which he enchants and rivets them. Such as this is ever the curse of those who follow worldly ends and principles, and support them upon worldly reasoning.

The question is,—can it be wrong to give now what it was our duty to give formerly, and is a duty still in all other countries, merely because we have a greater accumulation of riches, and the difficulties and dis-

tresses of the poorer classes are greater? If so, this one curse upon the seat of Mammon's kingdom, this noisome sore upon the men who have his mark, is sufficient for us to notice, as comprehending the rest, without detailing all the necessary effects and consequences by which this judgment must be worked out. Those consequences we are suffering already, though only beginning to suffer them; because, whether the principle be a true or false one, we are determined to act upon it. It is a principle too abominable for the adoption of any merely heathen country; and accordingly our punishment shall be heavier than that of any other kingdom, heathen or idolatrous.

What, then, ought to be done for the poor in this emergency? Should the whole system of poor-relief be immediately changed, the laws altered, the parishes give out of their public funds to every one that applies to them, and increase their dietary to the standard of relief in Paris, and the charities open their doors and purses to every one

who pleases to take the benefit of them? A political system cannot be altered in a moment, except by revolution; though great changes for good may be effected much more rapidly than politicians would credit. If all things were changed together for the better, the new system would work well at once;—but can the Ethiopian change his skin? While the rest of the machine remains the same, no one part can perform at a different speed, or on a different scale of duty. No one parish or place dare do its part, while the rest of the body to which it is vitally attached is governed by a different system of nerves, and nourished by a different circulation. But the public measures will not be changed for the better; it is evident that they will grow worse. If they were to be improved at all, it would be by a gradual and lingering advance, with many a regretful eye turned back upon Egypt, and many a vote by noisy acclamation for the re-erection of the golden calf. But there will be no such thing at all. The Egyptians themselves will never leave

Egypt,—till, rising up together to follow and bring back the chosen which are essaying to escape from their dominion and contagion, they shall be swallowed up in the self-sought billows of a blood-stained sea.

The parishes and public charities cannot change their system suddenly — they cannot do their duty. They ought to change their system by degrees, and accommodate it, as they now do, to the general system, if it improves ; and if it does not, they must stretch it as far as possible in the right direction. Their bias and leaning must be towards the desirable practice ; and by the force of continual example and effort they may do something, either towards a general fashion and improvement, or in staying and stemming the downward stream of evil habit and principle.

+ Public bodies dare not do their duty;—but individuals ought not to be deterred by similar reasons. In them it will not cause the same ill effect. The adoption of pure and perfect Christian practice by any one family,



or body of men, or individuals, may always be proved by anticipation to be necessarily productive of all manner of absurdities ; but in practice it is not so. God takes care to verify His own precepts ; so that in practice, however seemingly impossible, they shall always work out the reward and the promise which belongs to them. And so in respect of charity : if evil would arise from a large body of Christians in one place beginning to set an example of real Christian benevolence, then God will provide that the first instances shall be distantly and evenly distributed, and that in this and other ways the fulfilment of His laws shall be justified by their success, and shall meet with the promised blessing. But real Christian practice, upon really Christian motives, can never be unsuccessful. Even in public bodies, it must be justified by means and workings which, upon worldly principles, we can neither anticipate nor comprehend. But with regard to individual persons, to whom His laws are addressed more directly, there can be no doubt or question.



Each person must fulfil his own duty according to God's command, fearlessly and implicitly, and there can be no doubt of the result and the success; but whether or not, successful or unsuccessful, he must implicitly perform it.

To individuals, therefore, each in his own peculiar walk and his private capacity, let me particularly address myself. I shall endeavour to remind and reassure them what are their real duties, though long obscured and forgotten through the false prevailing fashions and principles by which in the last age we have been darkened and surrounded. And I shall not much care to prove to those who are not already convinced of the hollowness and destructiveness of the present system, how surely the opposite course will lead to increasing happiness and honour, wealth, peace, prosperity, and strength.

The word of God says, "Give to him that asketh thee;"<sup>n</sup> "cast thy bread upon the

<sup>n</sup> I do not object, that men give too little meaning, or that they give a wrong meaning, but that they give

waters." Man's wisdom says, "Give nothing without inquiry;" "all indiscriminate almsgiving is an injury and a crime;" "the greater part of the money given in charity does more harm than good;" "the far greater number of cases are of impostors; and of those who are really distressed, the greater part are made beggars by getting assistance—they are made idle; whereas the proper way is to force them to depend on themselves, and to convince them that they have no other resources." One set of persons say, "I have been so often imposed on, that I will never give any thing again." Another set say, "I have seen so much harm done by charity, that I believe that no charity at all would be

no meaning at all to this precept. Our Saviour, at least, must have meant something by it. He must have meant, that asking ought rather to dispose us to giving than the contrary. He cannot have intended that asking should be a reason for not giving; that we ought *to refuse because a person asked*; that we should condemn a man, at once and of course, because he is a beggar.

better than the present system." And this though the whole amount given is so very small in comparison with what it ought to be !

But the word of God says, "Do good, and give, hoping for nothing again." Not that there will be no fruit : for the word of God has said again, "Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days." That is to say, Bestow thy alms and disperse thy charity where there is, to human foresight, no prospect of fruit. But the harvest and fruit will come, and man cannot prevent it, any more than he can foresee it ; not in the first month perhaps, or in the first season ; but ultimately it will shew itself, and ripen into abundant blessings both to the giver and to the receiver.

But what has a man to do with fruits ? The command is express ; and this ought to be enough for believers in revealed truth. But there is no such belief.

There is fruit, however ; for the promises are as express as the commands : and those

can perceive them plainly enough who already believe God's words implicitly, and act according to that belief; and only welcome these evidences as confirmations of their belief, not as the foundation of it.

But worldly wisdom cannot see these effects; it sees only every thing that is opposite. This is only one of the many political principles entailing a deep and heavy curse upon us in consequence of the conclusions of human reasoning being put in competition with the maxims of revealed truth, which are bringing us rapidly to our fall. Every principle of government is essentially heathen; every approved maxim of life is worldly. In the mean time society is corrupted, disorganised, ready to rot and crumble to pieces; and yet no remedy can be approved or devised for recovering the world from its disease, bordering upon dissolution, except a completer development of the very same principles which have brought us to this crisis. The poor are entirely separated from the rich; they are

become two distinct and opposite classes; and these opposing forces are at declared and open war; a war which promises success to the poorer party, and threatens property with pillage, and the law with subversion. Yet the mischief is supposed to be, that the system under which these evils have arisen has not been sufficiently carried out; and the remedy is supposed to be, to carry them still further. Luxury is excused, defended, justified, applauded, because it promotes employment for the poor; yet with every increase of luxury and wealth, the poor become continually poorer. The accumulation of riches is the first political virtue, the statesman's sunshine and *summum bonum*; yet with every heaping-up of riches, the number of the poor increases in proportion, and so does the depth of their misery. Machinery is the greatest advantage to the poor man, in the greatest possible extent, for it multiplies employment for the working-class much faster than it takes it away; and yet nearly the whole of the female population, a

given proportion of the human race, has been thrown out of the means of gaining even a pittance by their exertions, by lace-making, by spinning, by straw-plaiting, by needle-working, which occupied every child and housewife aforetime, by this very machinery ; and this evil is continually becoming greater with every new invention.<sup>o</sup>

It were almost profaneness to attempt to analyse these operations, or to justify the truth of God's precepts, by pretending to point out the blessings that would be attendant upon obedience to them, further than as they may be incidentally mentioned

<sup>o</sup> During the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth, (when wages were appointed by the justices,) women's wages were half those of men, sometimes more. (SIR H. EDEN'S *State of the Poor, and History of the Labouring Classes*, vol. iii. Appendix, pp. 96, 99, 102-107.) They were higher in proportion at the end of the sixteenth century ; and still higher at the end of the fifteenth century. (*Ibid.* pp. 89-91.) But the difficulty of getting any employment at all is a still greater evil, and to a greater extent, than the depreciation of women's wages.



in the course of this appeal. Any such attempt must be inadequate. Besides, any such results would be despised and undervalued, as well as denied, by those who could not be convinced by the general results before noticed, unless they were supported and worked out upon principles and by reasoning such as they themselves are accustomed to use. But society ought not so to be analyzed. Human action and life cannot be planned on paper, or stated by algebra, or worked by arithmetic, or dissected by the knife, or tested by chemistry, or examined by a microscope, or classed botanically, or dissolved or reconstructed by the galvanic battery; neither can the mind that is formed on philosophical pursuits judge with superior discretion upon difficult moral subjects; neither can the mind that worships the world, and mammon, and the goddess of human reason, discern the workings of human society with real truth and wisdom. Human life is better observed and estimated by a broad than by a particular view; and the



heart and conscience that is formed and strictly moulded upon the pattern and principles of revealed truth, will arrive the most successfully at true conclusions in respect to it, without minute and microscopical discernment.

Let us give up these at once, the conclusions of worldly wisdom, and the products of scientific calculations, seeing their results, and their signal failure; and let us look with faith to the revealed word of God, and examine with confidence what He has said, and what those have said respecting alms-giving who have been rich in heavenly wisdom. Founding ourself upon this rule, let us regulate our own conduct, and endeavour to improve our practice towards the poor in accordance with the spirit of it. If experience and human observation and reasoning should be found to justify in some instances, within our limited sphere of vision, any of these precepts, let us thank God for this support and encouragement to our faith; but if not, let us act by the same rule faith-

fully and implicitly. The exercise of judgment is never excluded; as our Lord Himself and his Apostles used a choice and discretion as to who were fit persons to be miraculously healed. But this judgment will be best improved and directed by being firmly based upon religious wisdom. Neither must the judgment be too narrowly and shrewdly exercised. The greatest good that I have seen done in the world has been done by weak and foolish persons, under the influence of a good heart, and a good conscience, and a thorough reliance upon and obedience to Christian truth and precept.

Let us listen to the word of truth.

“The poor shall never cease out of the land; therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, thy poor, and to thy needy in thy land.”<sup>p</sup>

Yet the law affects to say that there shall be no poor, nor any that shall have occasion to require thy aid; that it shall be a crime

<sup>p</sup> Deut. xv. 11.

for any one to ask in public ; and for thee, therefore, to give. And the poor greatly and continually increase in number and misery.

The only society of thousands, of which it is on record that there was not any that lacked, was that of the first Christians, among whom their goods were parted in common upon pure Christian motives.

“Of no society comprehending many thousands (with one single exception, at least), have we ever read that ‘neither was there among them any that lacked.’ That single exception, I need not say, was the Church of Christ in the days of its primitive, and, alas, its evanescent purity ; for soon the waters that had been parted as by a miracle, returned to their accustomed channel ; soon, too soon, were inequalities of circumstances and condition once more witnessed among the brotherhood of Christ ; soon it became necessary to charge the rich in this world that ‘they should be glad to distribute and willing to communicate ;’ and

that necessity still continues, for ‘the poor shall never cease out of the land.’”<sup>q</sup>

“Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days.

“Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.

“He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.

“In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.”<sup>r</sup>

Yet man’s wisdom says, Look well to the application and to the result, and that you do not encourage people to become beggars. And take care that you do not do more harm than good by what you give.

<sup>q</sup> Sermon by the Rev. T. Dale, for the Greville-Street Hospital, 1839.

<sup>r</sup> Eccles. xi. 1, 2, 5, 6.

Never give without inquiry. And if you cannot inquire, why, then the safe and proper side is, not to give.

Whereas, the proper rule is, never to refuse without inquiry. Inquire always, if you can; and if you find deception, refuse. But give whenever deception is not proved; and whenever you cannot inquire, therefore, give.

The Jewish rule, as given by Maimonides, is good upon this subject.

“If a poor man who is not known applyeth, saying, ‘I am an hungered, I pray thee give me that I may eat,’ he shall not be examined, to learn whether he be a deceiver, but food shall be instantly given to him. If he be naked, and pray to be clothed, then let him be examined, to learn whether he be a deceiver.”

With regard to deceivers, that is their concern, not ours. We shall hear presently what one of the Christian fathers says upon this subject. We are so very careful of the good and conduct of others, that we would

not put temptation within their reach. But let us do our duty, and caution them of theirs. If charity were to be given upon true Christian principles, and the opportunity for giving welcomed as a blessing, while the restraint were made to lie with the poor themselves—it being pressed upon them that they must give an account to God, and justify what they receive to their own conscience, and be responsible for the acceptance of it,—the dispensing of charity would be put upon a very different and much improved footing, and both the giving and receiving be mutually blessed to very different purposes and effects.

But this supposes a condition of things, and an intercourse with the poor, which is most foreign to the practice of society, and the total absence of which is at the bottom of numberless evils under which we are labouring. The practice and working of such a principle cannot be understood. We can only tread upon the threshold of real charity. If the door itself can be but partly



opened, it is a wonder, under the present state of things. But the arcana of the interior cannot as yet be viewed, till the atmosphere in which we are enveloped is cleared away, and we see with the eyes of an opposite experience.

When the first Christians distributed their goods in common, it did not fail but that some were enticed and encouraged to idleness by reason of it. "We hear that there are some among you which walk disorderly, working not at all, but are busy-bodies." But what said the Apostle? Did he abolish the distribution, or, for fear of this, forbid that they should give freely? No, not any thing of this sort. "If any would not work, let him not (presume to) eat." But he exhorted such persons by their own conscience, and by their faith in Christ, that they should work for themselves and their brethren, and resist the temptation to idleness. "Now them that are such, we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work and eat their own bread. *But ye, bre-*



*thren,*” thus he says to the rich, “*be not weary in well-doing.*”<sup>s</sup>

“Do good and lend, hoping for nothing again. And your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest; for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.

“Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.”<sup>t</sup>

“Help the poor for the commandment’s sake; and turn him not away because of his poverty;” *i. e.* let the fact of his being poor be a sufficient claim upon thee.

But the law of Pagan Christianity inculcates, “Examine well the character of those to whom you give; lest you should encourage vice and wickedness. And it is not fit that the good and bad should be treated alike; and that the vicious should not receive the punishment, and feel the consequences of their wickedness.”

Let us listen again to the voice of God, both to His promises and His threatenings.

“The liberal soul shall be made fat; and

<sup>s</sup> 2 Thess. iii. 10-13.

<sup>t</sup> Luke vi. 35, 36.

he that watereth shall be watered also himself.”<sup>u</sup>

“ He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord ; and that which he hath given will He pay him again.”<sup>v</sup>

“ Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.”<sup>w</sup>

“ He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed ; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.”<sup>x</sup>

“ He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack ; but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.”<sup>y</sup>

“ Blessed is he that considereth the poor and needy ; the Lord will deliver him in the time of trouble.”<sup>z</sup>

“ Give alms of thy goods, and never turn thy face from any poor man ; and then the face of the Lord shall not be turned away from thee.”<sup>a</sup>

<sup>u</sup> Prov. xi. 25.

<sup>v</sup> Ib. xix. 17.

<sup>w</sup> Ib. xxi. 13.

<sup>x</sup> Ib. xxii. 9.

<sup>y</sup> Ib. xxviii. 27.

<sup>z</sup> Ps. xli. 1.

<sup>a</sup> Tobit iv. 7.

“ Give alms of such things as ye have ; and behold all things are clean unto you.”<sup>b</sup>

“ I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink ; I was a stranger, and ye took me in ; naked, and ye clothed me ; I was sick, and ye visited me.

“ Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

“ Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”<sup>c</sup>

Let us listen again to what is said by the apostolic fathers.

“ Thou shalt labour with thy hands to give to the poor, that thy sins may be forgiven thee.

“ Break off thy sins by almsgiving, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor ; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.”<sup>d</sup>

<sup>b</sup> Luke xi. 41.

<sup>c</sup> Matt. xxv. 34-36, 40.

<sup>d</sup> Comp. Dan. iv. 27 (Septuagint).

“Thou shalt not deliberate whether thou shouldst give; nor, having given, murmur at it; give to every one that asks; so shalt thou know who is the good rewarder of thy gifts.”<sup>f</sup>

“Give alms simply (without distinction) to all that are in want, not doubting (or hesitating as) to whom thou givest. But *give to all*; for God will have us give to all of all His own gifts. *They, therefore, that receive shall give an account to God*, both wherefore they received, and to what end. And they that receive without a real need shall give an account for it; but he that gives shall be innocent. For he has fulfilled his duty, as he received it from God; not making any choice (or distinction as) to whom he should give and to whom not. And this service he did with simplicity, and to the glory of God.”<sup>g</sup>

“Give freely to them that are in need. For some, by too free feeding, contract an

<sup>f</sup> Catholic Epistle of St. Barnabas, sect. 19.

<sup>g</sup> The Shepherd of Hermas, 2d Command.

infirmity in their flesh, and do injury to their bodies; whilst the flesh of others, who have not food, withers away, because they want sufficient nourishment, and their bodies are consumed. Wherefore this intemperance is hurtful to you who have, and do not communicate to them that want.”<sup>h</sup>

The poor man is the rich man’s road to heaven: “*Via cæli pauper est.*” So says St. Chrysostom.<sup>i</sup> The Homily says that the poor are in Christ’s stead.<sup>j</sup> If we assist only those of whom we have obtained knowledge, how can we place ourselves within reach of the blessing, “I was a stranger, and ye took me in?” “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares;”<sup>k</sup> and Abraham, by so doing, even entertained the Lord.<sup>l</sup>

<sup>h</sup> Shepherd of Hermas, Visions, iii. 9.

<sup>i</sup> Homily on Almsgiving, part 1.

<sup>j</sup> Ibid.

<sup>k</sup> Heb. xiii. 2.

<sup>l</sup> “If a poor traveller tells her that he has neither strength, nor food, nor money left, she never bids him go to the place from whence he came, or tells him that she cannot relieve him, because he may be a cheat,

The following is from John Hales's  
"Golden Remains:"<sup>m</sup>

"The writings of the fathers run much in commendation of the ancient monks, whose manner was to sit in the fields and by the highways, to direct wandering passengers in the way, and to relieve all distressed by want, or injured, and to carry them home to their cells, and perform upon them all the duties of humanity. This serves well to tax us, who affect a kind of intempestive prudence and unseasonable discretion, in performing the little good we do; from whom so hardly, and after so long inquiry and entreaty, drops some small benevolence, like or she does not know him; but she relieves him for that reason, because he is a stranger, and unknown to her. For it is the most noble part of charity to be kind and tender to those whom we have never known before, and perhaps may never see again in this life. 'I was a stranger, and ye took me in,' saith our blessed Saviour; but who can perform this duty that will not relieve persons that are unknown to him?"—LAW'S *Serious Call*, chap. viii.

<sup>m</sup> Page 35.



the sun in winter, long ere it rise, and quickly gone. How many occasions of Christian charity do we let slip, when we refuse to give our alms unless we first cast doubts, and examine the persons, their lives, their necessities; though it be only to reach out some small thing, which is due unto him whatsoever he be. It was anciently a complaint against the Church, that the liberality of Christians made many idle persons. But be that so, yet no other thing befell them than what befalls their Lord, who knows and sees that His sun shines, and His rain is every day abused; and yet the sun becomes not like a sack, nor the heavens like brass. Unto Him must we, by His own commandment, be like; and whom can we exclude, that have a pattern of such courtesy proposed to us to follow?"<sup>n</sup>

<sup>n</sup> "It may be," says Miranda, "that I often give to those that do not deserve it, or that will make an ill use of my alms. But what then? Is not this the very method of divine goodness? Does not God make His sun to rise on the evil and on the good? Is not this



Sir Thomas Brown, in his "*Religio Medici*" (Part I. iii. 1), expresses his rule for almsgiving :

" I give no almes," he says, " to satisfie the hunger of my brother, but to fulfil and accomplish the will and command of my God. I draw not my purse for his sake that demands it, but His that enjoined it ; I relieve no man upon the rhetorick of his miseries, nor to content mine own commiserating disposition ; for this is still but moral charity, and an act that oweth more to passion than reason. He that relieves another upon the

the very goodness that is recommended to us in the Scripture, that, by imitating it, we may be children of our Father who is in heaven, who sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust ? And shall I withhold a little money or food from my fellow-creature, for fear he should not be good enough to receive it of me ? Do I beg of God to deal with me not according to my merit, but according to His own great goodness ? and shall I be so absurd as to withhold my charity from a poor brother, because he may perhaps not deserve it ? Shall I use a measure towards him, which I pray God never to use towards me ?"—LAW'S *Serious Call*, chap. viii.

bare suggestion and bowels of pity, doth not this so much for his sake as for his own; for by compassion we make others' misery our own, and so by relieving them we relieve ourselves also."

The laws and practice of the Jews must shame us Christians of the present day. It is well known that a Jew beggar is a thing scarcely to be seen. And how is this accomplished? Not by constables and vagrant-acts, which inflict imprisonment and whipping (it was clean cutting off the upper gristle of the right ear, at one time!) for asking a penny, but by supplying the means of subsisting without it; by enjoining liberality, not without a superior encouragement to labour, both by conscience and interest.

The neglect of almsgiving among the Jews has ever been a crime of the deepest dye. "If any person refuse to give alms," says Maimonides, "or if he giveth less than becometh him, the assembly shall use compulsion, and shall inflict on him the punishment due to rebellion. They shall take his

goods from before his face, even on the Sabbath-eve.” Rabbi S. Jarchi says (Bava-Bathra), no excuse is allowable for neglecting the poor.

The following are some few of the practical precepts of the Jews for the treatment of the poor, as collected by Maimonides.<sup>o</sup>

“ He who giveth a fifth part of his means obeyeth the precept in the highest degree. He who giveth a tenth part of his means obeyeth the precept in a medium degree. He who giveth less than a tenth part is a man of an evil eye.

“ If a poor man, who is not known, applyth, saying, ‘ I am an hungered, I pray thee give me that I may eat,’ he shall not be examined, to learn whether he be a deceiver or no, but food shall be given him instantly. If he be naked, and pray to be clothed, then let inquiry be made respecting him, to learn whether or no he be a deceiver. If, however, he be a known person, then let him be

<sup>o</sup> Laws of the Hebrews relating to the Poor and Stranger. By Rab. M. Maimonides. Chap. vii.-x.

clothed forthwith, according to his station, and let not any inquiries be made concerning him.

“If there be a poor man who refuseth to receive alms, artifice ought to be employed, and, under the name of a gift, or of a loan, let him be relieved.

“If any person be so generous as to give greater alms than his means allow; or, to avoid the shame of refusal, shall reduce himself to straits, in order that he may give alms to the collectors, from such a man it is forbidden either to exact or to ask for alms; and if any collector endeavour to excite shame in such an one, future vengeance shall fall upon him.”

There is no very frequent occasion for the use of this precept in modern Christian charity.

“The poor who are neighbours are to be regarded before all others; the poor of one’s own family are to be regarded before the poor of one’s own city; and the poor of one’s own city before the poor of another city.”

Charity begins at home: that is, real charity. The modern charities of the rich are mostly given in public subscriptions, and to distant objects, which they cannot be acquainted with. The effect of giving alms to those close to us and connected with us is, that we acquaint ourselves with the person and miseries of the receiver; charity has its proper use and operation; and both the giver and the receiver are blessed. There is more than can be known, except by experience, in this maxim, "Charity begins at home;" and this principle in charity will not be found to diminish the supplies to really useful objects at a distance; but would rather be found to increase the fruitfulness of the spring, as well as make it flow in the right direction. Charity at home will not be found to diminish the healthful supply abroad; but the beginning with foreign and distant charities may stop the supply homeward. However, the true principle is, that every one should attend to his own concerns first, and to his own neighbourhood; and

this will be found to be much more sufficient in practice than is imagined. There is more than money in almsgiving.

“A woman is to be fed and clothed, and brought out of the house of captivity, before a man ; since man is accustomed to wander, but woman is not ; and her feelings of modesty are more acute.

“Never, since the commencement of time, have we seen or heard of any congregation of Israelites in which there hath not been the chest for alms ; but, with regard to the basket,<sup>p</sup> it is the custom to have it in some places and not in others. However, it is now the custom in every place for collectors to make *daily* collections, distributing those collections upon every Sabbath-eve.

“Upon fast-days, Israelites are bound to distribute food to the poor. If upon any

<sup>p</sup> From the next sentence it would seem that the chest was a thing fixed, affording each one an opportunity of voluntary contribution ; but that the basket was to be carried about, bringing home to each person a personal application.



fast-day, after taking their meals, the people go to rest without making such distribution, they are like unto shedders of blood.

“Whosoever finds that he hath sufficient by him for two meals, is prohibited from *accepting* any thing from the alms-basket. Whosoever hath sufficient for fourteen meals shall *accept* nothing out of the alms-chest. Whosoever possesseth two hundred zuzi, even though he carry on no trade by means of them, is prohibited from accepting either the gleanings, or the thing left through forgetfulness, or the corner, or the tithes of the poor.”

From this it appears that the daily and weekly collections were distinct from and in addition to the tithes of the poor, and other legal benefits.

“If a poor person be in want, who possesseth a house and household goods, albeit they be of gold or silver, he shall not be compelled to sell his house nor his goods.  
\* \* \* But whoever shall have solicited alms, shall sell his household goods of such a de-



scription, and buy others of less cost; and then he may accept alms.

“The poor man shall not be driven to part with his property at a season when it is scarcely saleable.

“If a collection be made to relieve the wants of a poor person, and there be collected more than he may need; yet shall that which remaineth over and above his wants be given unto him;—for the overplus of the poor belongeth to the poor.

“If a poor man giveth a pruta to the basket, or a pruta to the chest, it shall be accepted of him. If he refuseth to contribute, no compulsion shall be used; and if, when new garments are given to him, he giveth up his old garments, they shall be accepted. If he giveth them not, no compulsion shall be used.”

This forcibly reminds us of the widow's mite.

“If any one giveth alms to the poor with a malevolent countenance and down-cast looks, albeit he may give a thousand

pieces of gold, yet hath he destroyed and wholly obliterated the merit of the action. Let him then give with a benignant and a cheerful countenance, offering words of consolation to the afflicted poor, as it is written (Job xxx.):

‘ Did I not weep for him that was in trouble ?

Was not my soul grieved for the poor ?’

And let him address words of pity and condolence, as it is written, ‘ And I caused the widow’s heart to sing for joy.’

“ Until the end of time shall it be, that, to avoid becoming dependent upon created beings, and burdensome to the Church, the most frugal mode of living shall be adopted, and difficulties be encountered ; for thus teach the wise men, saying, ‘ Let the Sabbath be as a day of work, rather than become dependent upon created beings.’ And albeit a man be wise and of honourable station, yet, if he be reduced to poverty, he shall not disdain manual arts, however unworthy of him, so that he avoid dependence upon others.

“He who, unconstrained by real necessity, accepteth alms, is a deceiver of the people; and his life shall not be extended to old age.”

Atheist France may read a lesson to infidel England upon the principles of poor-relief. It is true that their foundation is purely philosophical; but even pure and simple philosophy, without religion, is more perfect and stable, and cannot shape and mould itself into such wild perversions as that base, adulterated compound of nine proportions to one, of which is formed our idol and palladium, Political Economy.

The French still retain some sparks of mercy and truth, because that seventh devil, mammon, has not yet got such entire possession with them as over us. The hardening effect of intellectual philosophy, ambition, pride, passion, vanity, and selfishness, can only weigh down and crush the still existing feelings, and hinder them from useful exercise; but the idolatry of money ex-

pels them altogether :—"Avaunt, ye obstructive and insolent pests!"

The following is the greater part of the preliminary note to the official collection of the rules and instructions for the administration of out-door relief to the poor of the city of Paris, published in 1839 :—

"Relief to the poor at their dwellings is perhaps the most important and interesting branch of public relief. Hospitals and poor-houses ought, as it were, to be only the supplement. They are necessary for those who are in a state of absolute destitution, without relations, friends, or any personal means of subsistence; but by giving relief at their own homes, we may considerably diminish the number of persons who require to be admitted, and enable them to remain in the bosom of their families.

"It is much more gratifying to the poor sick or infirm man to be assisted at his own house, and to receive there the attention of his wife and children, or relations, than to be in a manner isolated, when placed in an

hospital, amidst individuals who are not bound to him by any tie either of blood or of friendship.

“Public morality must needs gain by this mode of relief, which tends to rivet the bonds of family affection, and to assist children or relatives to fulfil a duty which nature dictates.

“The administration of public relief at the dwellings of the poor, is an institution which was long wished for before the force of circumstances led to its creation.

“The endowments made by the piety of our ancestors, the gifts of charitable individuals, and the liberality of government, furnished formerly habitual assistance to the poor, and additional relief, when any unfortunate circumstances rendered this necessary.

“This relief reached the poor by means of the curates, or by charitable societies, private associations, and religious establishments, of which the primary object was the succour of the indigent.

“The Revolution having exhausted or misplaced the greater part of the resources which administered to the wants of the poor, out-door relief has been established, of which the administration has been united to that of the hospitals and poor-houses, under the direction of the general council.

“It may easily be supposed that the good administration of this department, more perhaps than of any other, depends rather upon the persons who are entrusted with its management than on the laws made for its regulation.

“Indeed, if men of enlightened minds are chosen, who have a feeling for the misery of the poor, and are willing to employ themselves for their want, and these persons have sums given them to distribute, we may be assured beforehand that this money will be well employed, and that the relief will reach its right destination.

“But the government, in setting apart funds for the succour of the poor, has the right to prescribe the mode of employment

of those funds, . . . . to demand an account, &c. And in doing so it performs a duty.

“It is a noble and an honourable mission to be, as respects the poor, the eye and the hand of the government. The administrator to whom it is confided should be jealous to prove that he has been a faithful agent, not only in turning nothing to his own profit, but in conforming exactly to the rules which have been prescribed to him.

“It cannot be in the case of public relief as with the alms of an individual, which are given either by himself, or by the hands of another. He is free to distribute as he will, and to whom he will. If he confides this care to another, he is not obliged to require an account, and his duty is not the less fulfilled.

“The charitable man ought undoubtedly to use as much discretion as possible in the distribution of his gifts ; but, after all, should he be mistaken, or be deceived, he has still attained his principal object,—he has wished



to perform a good action, and he has acquired the merit of it," &c. &c.

So that, a heart open to the miseries of the poor is not in France held to be inconsistent with enlightenment of mind ; nor soft and tender feelings to blind the eyes of benevolence, so as to ensure the misemployment of charity, and prevent its reaching its right destination. And even in the eyes of those in power, it is not a fault to have been deceived ; a man has a right to dispense his bounty where and how he pleases ; and if he shall chance to bestow it mistakenly or injudiciously, yet nevertheless in so doing he has not been guilty of a crime against society, but has performed a good action.

I have not proposed to enter into a detail of particulars, in regard to the proper modes of treating the poor in each different branch and subject. It would best suit the public taste, if I were to treat of diet, and clothing, and workhouses, and education, and friendly societies, and saving-banks, and district-visiting, and the new poor-laws, and dispensaries,

and hospitals, and lying-in charities, and infant and industrial schools, and the British and Foreign and the National School plans, and the Madras and the simultaneous systems. All these are matters of high interest for discussion, and would each bear a separate and lengthened treatment. But they are not at all our topic at present. What I desire now is, to assert a principle. The whole character of the treatment of the poor ought to be altered; the entire principle ought to be changed. If this were effected, the details matter not. The particulars would take care of themselves. If the life and soul of charity were real, and the motive perfect, the practice would correct itself; if the eye were fixed and directed right, the foot would find its own way. Every one who draws a line, or cuts cloth, knows that the way is to keep the eye fixed and intent upon the end, and the hand is sure to go straight up to it; but if the intermediate points are looked to, why then the very care bestowed makes all awry and crooked. And there is no one

best or uniform mode in giving or acting. The heart will guide the judgment and the hand; and if that be right, all ways, and means, and instruments are the best, however various. These few following remarks, however, may be made, as involving essential principles;—the rest may be gathered, by those who are disposed to be persuaded, from what has been above observed and collected.

What the poor most want is a friend. They want more notice, and attention, and communication. The classes are estranged from one another. There is no such connexion as that of patron and client, that the poor man might always have some one person to resort to, for advice, for assistance, for protection, for defence, for encouragement in his depression. No one has an idea of the want of courage that exists among the poor, when they are oppressed by sudden calamity. They have no energy to raise themselves again. The loss of a husband, of a child even, a lodger run away

without paying his rent, a debt incurred by illness,—these and such other single calamities constantly depress the poor person, and so paralyse him as to prevent even his usual exertions ; and hence so very frequently the resort to and the habit of drinking. And all this for want of present assistance, of a sufficient friend at hand, a word only perhaps of promise and encouragement, so as to prop up exertion by hope. But there is no means existing towards such a protection ; no step towards a first introduction ; no welcome given to such complaints.

But it is not only in pecuniary matters ; it is also in the habits and amusements of life, that the poor especially want the countenance and encouragement, the intercourse and influence, of the rich. An amused and happy people is never a rebellious one. Even the much-vaunted sobriety is known proverbially to be an omen and precursor of great political convulsions. Wine maketh glad the heart. But like all other things, it is now

abused ; and because it is abused, it must be condemned entirely : and yet this abuse lies at the door of those very persons who most condemn it. It is the same with the poor man's amusements. We put down fairs, and say that they are profligate ; and either deprive men of all excitement and merriment, or drive them to seek it elsewhere and in secret. We expel them off the green, and eject them from the scene of public observation, and drive them to the public-house, and the skittle-ground at the back of it, and other gambling and riot, in secret and crowded meetings.

And we ourselves are the cause of all these things, and of the abuses for which we condemn them. The cricket and football on the green, and the fairs and the holydays, were not such scenes of riot formerly, nor so profligate and demoralising. The use of beer and spirits, and the parlour of the tavern, used not to be identified essentially with drunkenness. And what was the reason of this ? There were two or three, or

more, squires in a parish, and each squire and his family attended every fair, and gave his support, and his countenance and influence, to honest and sociable amusement; and his authority to prevent abuses and excesses. He mixed with the villagers upon the green, and gave a zest to their sports and merriment. His authority was tolerated and obeyed, because his motives were known and appreciated; because his favours gave a title to respect, and there was a pleasure in obedience. Here then, again, what the poor want is a friend.

But these scenes and seasons can never come back again. It is impossible for a rich people to be liberal and kind. It is impossible for a free people not to be selfish and tyrannical. Civilisation is too far advanced; society is grown too old for the healthy circulation of youth, the buoyancy of spirits—all the muscles and members being in action together—ever to be restored again. At those times, when the children of the high and haughty laird had each their foster-brother or sister among



his own tenants and peasantry, the links and attachments of society were infinite, and the bonds were indissoluble. The blood of the heart circulated to the hands and feet; it was owned to be the same blood; and the head and the hands did not disclaim the communion of membership. But now such connexion would be low, would be degrading; such bonds were coarse and vulgar—they were bonds of iron. If any attachments may now exist, they must be of gold:—if haply any attachments between high and low, between poor and rich, may exist any longer. When the lord and serf sat at the same table, and ate of the same dish, and were divided from one another only by the salt-cellar, what mattered it his being a slave! He was confessed to be of the same blood, and treated as a son, and fed with the voice, the smile, and the bounty of a father. What matters it the operative receiving wages, and spending it as he will, and being free to hire himself to what fellow-citizen he pleases, or not to hire himself at all, if his individualship



should choose to starve or beg a life of vagabond idleness ! when his fellow-citizen master looks not on him as his fellow-man, and he eats his bread of independence or starves, as may be, as it were on the opposite side of the bars of an iron grating. Society once well knit and closely compact, as in ripening manhood, enduring and throwing off sharp diseases by the innate force and strength of nature, lived and grew to the form, and stature, and health, and vigour of a man : sound and perfect in limb ; strong and bold in mind and understanding ; warm, open, and generous in heart and feelings ; and all these uniting and acting together, to command love, respect, and admiration. But society is a disunited and disordered mass : the joints are unknit ; the circulation scarcely reaches the extremities ; mortifications threaten themselves in the distant members ; inflammatory congestion takes place in all parts ; the capillaries are not duly fed by the heart and arteries ; the muscles do not obey the head ; there is no concert, and consent, and co-opera-

tion ; and the vital principle has not strength enough to rally its disturbed and distracted powers, to unite in restoring health and uniformity of circulation. But the whole lies an unknit, unconnected mass : a corrupt, disordered system ; powerful still in its parts ; inflammatory in action ; but loosened, relaxed, overgrown, disjointed, and prostrated, as if by fever and palsy.

We cannot be restored again from this state. Old age cannot be recovered to youth and health. But the diseases which have long been creeping upon us must grow and take possession ; and these, though retarded, must bring us to dissolution. There is one disease which alone must be sufficient to seal our fate. The system of public funded debts has taught the man of wealth the idea of *irresponsible* property : a thing which never can exist ; but the very belief of which is enough to bring down judgment upon the people by whom it is entertained. The landed proprietor has tenants, and labourers, and tenants' labourers, and neighbours, and parishioners,

all of whom, within a certain extended district, may look to him for protection and assistance, for advice, at least, and notice, and countenance. Even the tradesman and the merchant have their connexions and correspondents, their customers, their clerks, their travellers, their shopmen and warehousemen. But the holder of funded property owns no claim from any one. He receives his income at the day, or his banker receives it, without asking or thanking any one for it; and he spends it where, and when, and how he pleases, at Rome, or in London. There is no one who can say, "Sir, I am your tenant, or your tenant's labourer;" or, "I worked on your honour's estate, and recollect your father and grandfather." No one person has any greater claim than another upon such a man; that is, no one has any claim at all. All sense of obligations and duties is forgotten; and looking with triumph down upon the landed gentleman, who laments the low price of corn and the bad season, and finds that his

tenants, as well as his farm-houses, must be propped, and the poor must be provided for, and happiness must be diffused over a sphere and circle to which he is bound indissolubly,—he says, with exultation, “There is no human being that has any claim on me;” and, “My income is as sure as the nation.” Envy has naturally followed so independent a condition; and emulation being greater of that which is envied than of that which is wise and good, all other persons have rivalled the expense and habits of the fundholder—his selfishness, therefore, of necessity—his disregard for others—his separation from the lower and dependent classes—his entire irresponsibility. The consequence is, that the landed gentry are wholly unable to live upon their estates, and more unwilling than unable; for they cannot afford the style and luxury which they ape, and at the same time fulfil the calls of duty; and therefore the claims of their station are a clog upon them. Instead of the duties and obligations of other stations being ingrafted on the funded in-

come, the irresponsibility and selfishness of the fundholders are grafted on the landowner, and the duties and obligations are torn from the landed estate. In consequence, towns are resorted to, where your next neighbour is not even known as an acquaintance; and if any per-centage, or pittance, or a solitary guinea is given in charity, it is given to a public institution, without any knowledge of, or interest in the particular cases, or any thanks from the person benefited; but the thanks come from the public in a laudatory advertisement, and the receipt is given in the newspapers.

Idleness, and envy, and luxury, in the use of property, have taught and produced a system of idleness, envy, and luxury in trade. This is no longer a nation of merchants, but of speculators. Fortunes must now be made in a few years, and like prizes in lotteries; and the blanks accordingly are as numerous. The system of joint-stock companies, and of carrying on trade through a few directors, is a system of idleness in

trading; and that at a time when personal attention and exertion in business is more needful than ever it was. It is a system of gentleman-shopkeeping; and will succeed just about as well as gentleman-farming. It is a scheme of trading by proxy, and of wholesale dormant-partners. But this is not our subject, though connected with it. It is another disease by which the body politic is corrupting, and hastening to dissolution.

Health cannot be restored to a body so disorganised. The members cannot be brought to act together again, with mutual co-operation, with energy and activity. Yet some few sparks of reanimation and returning feeling have lately been struck out in the plan of district-visiting,—that most successful and wonder-working system,—which humanises and conciliates the poorer classes; elevates, encourages, stimulates the poor man, and brings a ray of consolation and hope to his dwelling, which never before visited and cheered his despair, his degra-



dation, and destitution ;—and it teaches the wealthy visitor a better lesson even than to him, and one more deeply needed. There are some few attempts to provide amusement, and to encourage healthful recreation among the poor. In some places the patrons of friendly societies attend the periodical meetings, and their wives and daughters have joined the dance with the peasant and mechanic. These are the expiring sparks of exhausted health and life, the efforts of declining nature. What if these sparks should kindle into a flame ! The good God grant it ! There is hope still while there is life. What if the judgment be but deferred, and the life be lengthened and protracted, and the death made a little less convulsive and easier !

Squire Lewis was a gentleman of ancient family and moderate landed estate, in one of the western counties, in which there were other much more extensive landed proprietors. He resided all his life upon his property, and never incurred the expense of a



second house, nor adopted the style of London manners. He kept a liberal table, proportioned to his means; and he was one of the most friendly and sociable men in the world. Every body was welcome who came to him. Every one's claim or petition was complied with; and consequently he was said to be foolishly extravagant. He was always a little beyond his income, and some few repairs of his farms were not done; but though he did not enlarge his estate, he left it unimpaired, and he did not die in debt. He was the most cheerful, good-humoured man imaginable; he had something merry and smart for every one; and he laughed at every body's joke against himself. Every tone of his voice had something jocular in it. He was an easy, good sort of man. But withal he was universally respected. He had a ready ear for all the tales and distresses of his poorer neighbours, and he would spend hours in listening to them. This was a waste of a great deal of time; but he made that up partly, by living to

eighty. This was a low taste ; but he was six feet, and every inch a perfect gentleman. He settled all the quarrels in the neighbourhood. He heard each party's story completely out ; joked and scolded both of them ; and sent them home the very best friends imaginable.

He attended all the meetings of gentry and magistrates, and always took the side of lenity. He granted licenses to publicans of questionable sobriety ; let off poachers upon their word of a gentleman ; punished the meddlesome man who had the law on his side ; dismissed the innocent aggressor ; kept the whole bench of justices in good humour ; did all the business himself ; sent every body away happy and contented ; and was said to be a very bad justice.

The great men loved and wondered at him ; his equals loved and laughed at him ; the common people loved, respected, adored him. They looked up to him as their counsellor, their protector, their friend, their father, and did whatever he recommended

them: "It must be right," said they, "for the Squire says it."

Squire Lewis was "*the* Squire;" he was never mentioned by any other name. He was as much the Squire of the county, as any other man was the Squire of his own parish; and all the common people supposed that his power was as great, and that he was equally well known by that title, all over England. A poor woman came up to a learned serjeant in the inns of court, and said to him, "Sir, if you will mention the Squire's name, the Chancellor will give me the estate." When the banks were run upon in 1825, he sat behind the counter of the principal county bank, and scolded the people home again. The iron-workers having collected together in vast numbers, with violent intentions, at a time of great distress, and being about to march, to the terror of the whole county, "the Squire" was requested to go and speak to them. After a few words from him,—“Well,” they said, “if the Squire says so, it must be true:”—

and so they all went home again. It cost twenty lives, the other day, to quiet a similar movement among the very same people, in a time of no depression or difficulty ; and the wound, it is to be feared, is not cured, but only slightly healed. How much easier are men governed by love than by the bayonet ! What a force there is in kindness and gentleness ! How the meek and simple may possess and govern the earth ! How much firmer is the empire over the hearts than over the minds of men !

“The Squire” reigned over very many hearts with an undivided empire. He was king, by general obedience and consent. The limits of his kingdom were not settled ; but there was no dispute or question of boundary. His dominions were always growing and extending ; but there was no note of remonstrance from his neighbours, or threat to resist the invasion. He had his body-guard, his standing army, his police, his fortresses. The goodwill of men was his defence ; every man, woman, and child was

his guard and soldier, trained to concert in action by oneness of love and feeling; he was their leader in the field, their head in all their sports and amusements; and whose voice but his could they hear and follow in the tumult of battle!

The Squire left behind him no marble monuments, no trophies of war and victory; his kingdom was of peace. It is only told of him, that in his time the people were happy and peaceable; no one person felt that he was wholly without a friend; people did as they pleased, but they never pleased to do any thing very wrong; people were merry and contented, and lived in harmony; and they dearly loved "the old Squire."

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## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER V.

### EXPERIMENT OF THE VOLUNTARY PAROCHIAL SYSTEM IN GLASGOW.

MANY of the topics of this chapter have already been urged by Dr. Chalmers, with convincing argument and eloquence, in his "Christian and Civic Economy of Large Towns." The 2d, 3d, 4th, and 11th chapters of that work are occupied in pointing out the advantage and increased efficiency of local administration in small districts.

The 7th chapter points out the ill effects of the clergy undertaking the distribution of any other than voluntary charity. It exhibits also the character and virtues of the poor, and the feeling manner in which they respond to personal kindness, intercourse, and attention.

In chapter 10 he shews the prejudicial and pauperising operation of a Poor-law, and the agency of paid officials; especially its effect in stifling the frugality of the poor, the kindness of relations, the sympathies of neighbours, and the charities of the richer classes.



Chapter 12 details the plan of the experiment adopted in St. John's parish, Glasgow, to return to the system of privately relieving the poor, and of providing for them by voluntary offerings instead of a compulsory assessment.

I should not myself have been so sanguine as to have commenced trying such an experiment in the first instance in a large manufacturing town. But the plan of voluntary charity was already general in Scotland; so that in this case it was only the transfer of the country system back again to the town, which had departed from it.

The complete process, and the results of this experiment in St. John's parish, and other matters connected with it, are fully detailed in this 12th chapter of Dr. Chalmers's *Civic Economy of Towns*, in a Speech delivered by him before the General Assembly of Scotland in 1822, and an Appendix to that Speech; in his Evidence before the Committee of the House of Commons on the question of a Poor-law for Ireland, given in 1830; also a Statement in regard to the Pauperism of Glasgow, from the experience of the last eight years, 1823; and in *Reflections of 1839*, on a protracted experience of Pauperism in Glasgow, of nineteen years. All these are

published together in the late edition of Dr. Chalmers's works, volumes 15 and 16; to which edition I shall refer in the following observations.

The experiment in St. John's parish, Glasgow, began in 1819, and has at length ceased in 1837, after eighteen years of successful operation. The following is an outline of the experience:—

Previous to the experiment the poor of Glasgow were provided for, partly by collections made at the church-doors on Sunday, partly by a general assessment of all the ten parishes. The voluntary offerings were transmitted by the kirk-session, the ecclesiastical establishment of each parish, to the general session; which last remitted back such sums to each separate kirk-session as their necessities required; and these sums were distributed to the poor by the elders of the parish,—constituting, together with the minister, the kirk-session. The public assessment was in the hands of the managers of the town-hospital, or poor-house. The process and rule was, that so long as a pauper required no more than 5s. a month, the kirk-session relieved him; when his necessities rose beyond that amount, he was passed over altogether to the town-hospital, the managers of which relieved him, either by a

larger out-door allowance, or by taking him into the town-hospital. If the funds of the general session were deficient, the requisite sum was handed over to them by the managers of the public assessment.

St. John's parish contained, in 1819, 8000 inhabitants; since increased to 12,000; and is the poorest district in Glasgow.<sup>a</sup>

The church-collection amounted at that time to 400*l.* per annum.<sup>b</sup> The expense of the kirk-session poor was 225*l.* So there was a surplus at the outset of 175*l.* per annum.

The number of the kirk-session poor was then 98; that of the town-hospital poor, applicable to St. John's parish, was 49; and the whole expense of the kirk-session and town-hospital

<sup>a</sup> The rich families in St. John's were twelve in number. The parish contributed 1-20th of the whole assessment of the town of Glasgow, and derived from it 1-8th or 1-10th.—DR. CHALMERS'S *Works*, vol. xvi. pp. 203, 220, 221, 317, 431.

<sup>b</sup> This fund was proportionably large, St. John's church being attended by many of the wealthy inhabitants of Glasgow. It was, however, deficient on this account, in one of the most essential principles of the system experimented upon, namely, that the funds should be contributed by the inhabitants of the locality, for the relief of their own neighbouring poor. The whole church-collection of Glasgow was 2000*l.*; the whole assessment, 13,000*l.*—*Ibid.* p. 280.

poor of St. John's together, was estimated at 1400ℓ.<sup>c</sup>

The kirk-session offered and undertook to provide for the existing kirk-session poor, and all future poor of whatsoever kind, whether proper for the kirk-session or the town-hospital, by means of their own voluntary collection of 400ℓ. The managers of the town-hospital were to continue to provide for the existing town-hospital poor, till they should become extinct by death or otherwise.

However, in the 4th year, March 1823, the kirk-session took upon themselves the maintenance of the then remaining town-hospital poor, in number 34; thus making the experiment complete and perfect from that period.<sup>d</sup>

St. John's continued to be subject to the general assessment for the town of Glasgow, as before; though their own burden was thus entirely taken off from it. Also, they were not protected from the immigration of paupers from the other parishes, by any law of residence: the whole of Glasgow being one parish for the purposes of settlement.

The order of deacons was re-established;

<sup>c</sup> Dr. Chalmers's Works, vol. xvi. pp. 221, 228, 233.

<sup>d</sup> Ibid. pp. 233, 320.

and to them was committed the management of the poor, each in one of the twenty-five districts into which the parish was for the purpose divided. The average population of these districts was about 400.<sup>e</sup>

The town-hospital poor of St. John's were reduced in the 4th year (1823) from 49 to 34; in 1833 there were only 4 remaining.<sup>f</sup>

The sessional poor were reduced at once from 98 to 82, by a scrutiny; on the 3d year the number was 77. Of these 8 would have gone to the town-hospital but for the new arrangement.<sup>g</sup>

The annual expenditure of the newly arisen pauperism in the 4th year (1823), was 66*l.*: the whole expense of the sessional poor at the same time was 268*l.* This included the expenses of casual poor.

The whole of the newly arising pauperism was, up to this time, provided for by the evening collection, amounting to 80*l.* in the year, and consisting chiefly of the halfpennies of the poorer classes. And this arrangement was continued to June 1823, namely, during the whole time that the evening services lasted.

<sup>e</sup> Dr. Chalmers's Works, vol. xvi. pp. 282, 320.

<sup>f</sup> Ibid. p. 441.

<sup>g</sup> Ibid. pp. 228, 261.

The town-hospital poor, then lately assumed by the kirk-session, cost 90*l*. So that the whole annual expenditure in 1823 amounted to 308*l*. In 1829 the whole expense was 384*l*. 17*s*. 7*d*.<sup>h</sup>

The offerings had risen from 400*l*. in the first year, to 482*l*. in the year 1833; and the average collection of the eighteen years was 430*l*. 14*s*.<sup>i</sup>

The whole of the annual fund was never consumed till the last of the eighteen years; and in the course of those years more than 1000*l*. of the surplus contributions were handed over towards the endowment of parochial schools, and for ecclesiastical purposes.<sup>j</sup>

The result of Dr. Chalmers's own experience upon this system was, that the condition of the poor was not made worse, and that their industry and frugality was increased by it. That increased aid and mutual support was given by relatives, and by the poor to one another, in their neighbourhood; and that the charity and benevolence of the rich was also stimulated.<sup>k</sup> The system was in the highest degree economical; as appears from the detail of expendi-

<sup>h</sup> Dr. Chalmers's Works, vol. xvi. pp. 223, 225, 230, 233, 267, 318, 319, 339.

<sup>i</sup> Ibid. pp. 435, 440.

<sup>j</sup> Ibid. pp. 266, 431.

<sup>k</sup> Ibid. pp. 305, 321, 322.



ture above mentioned, and as compared with the increasing expenditure in places subject to assessment; for while the average annual expenditure for St. John's parish during the eighteen years of the experiment, for a population of 10,000, was 366*l.*,<sup>k</sup> that in the Canongate, for a similar population, previous to a similar experiment being begun in it, was 900*l.* (vol. xvi. p. 193). The poor-rate of Glasgow increased from 3,940*l.* in 1803, to 13,120*l.* in 1820 (p. 312).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>k</sup> A small addition must be made on account of the remaining town-hospital poor during the first four years.

<sup>1</sup> To exemplify the comparative economy of the systems of assessment and voluntary contribution, the following instances are selected from different parishes in Scotland:—  
 “ In Dunse (assessed) the population is 3082; the fund for the poor, 615*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.* In Kilmichael and Glassary (not assessed) the population is 3400; the fund, 30*l.* 0*s.* 6*d.*,—less than a twentieth part of the former.—Eccles (assessed), population, 1820; fund, 327*l.* South Knapdale in Argyleshire (unassessed), population, 1720; fund, 33*l.*—Coldstream (assessed), population, 2384; fund, 615*l.* North Knapdale (not assessed), population, 2184; fund, 15*l.* 10*s.*—Coldingham (assessed), population, 2424; fund, 316*l.* 2*s.* 9*d.* Inverary (not assessed), population, 2061; fund, 124*l.*—Jedburgh (assessed), population, 4454; fund, 631*l.* 17*s.* 4*d.* Kilninian (not assessed), population, 4064; fund, 20*l.*—Hawick (assessed), population, 3688; fund, 899*l.* 14*s.*



The labours also of the deacons were inconsiderable, and tended rather to diminish than to increase, arising from the complete knowledge of every family, easily acquired in such small districts; the certainty felt that their real circumstances would be known, which limited the applications; and the increased frugality and mutual assistance, which diminished the occasions for charity.<sup>m</sup>

Lismore and Appin (not assessed), population, 3407; fund, 34*l*.—Wilton (assessed), population, 1500; fund, 309*l*. 17*s*. 11*d*. Kilmartin (not assessed), population, 1453; fund, 15*l*.—Kelso (assessed), 4408; fund, 899*l*. 5*s*. Rothsay (not assessed), 4970; fund, 171*l*. 3*s*. 7½*d*.—Morebattle (assessed), population, 983; fund, 306*l*. Kilninver (not assessed), 983; fund, 22*l*.

“The counties where the method of assessment is most general are among the most agricultural in Scotland; on the other hand, Campbleton is the most populous in Argyleshire, its population being 7,807, and the fund only 141*l*. 10*s*.; the employment of the people, too, is fishing, which is very precarious. In Kilchoman in Argyleshire, the population is 3131, the fund 10*l*.”—Vol. 16, pp. 295, 296.

I do not mean to say that these sums are at all sufficient, or that the poor are not suffering for want of sufficient support; but this shews at least the greater economy of the system.

<sup>m</sup> On the subject of the relative condition and character of the two sets of parishes (the assessed and unassessed),

In the fourth year (1823), the deacons made a report of their proceedings and experience. The average sum of their labours and attendance amounted to between two and three hours in a

the following extracts are taken from the original communications of the Scottish clergy, upon which the Third Report of the Select Committee of 1818, and also the Supplementary Report of the General Assembly (on the subject of legal assessment and voluntary contributions), is founded.

“The first are a few instances from the county of Sutherland. In Wick, the population is 5,080; the fund, 48*l.* 6*s.* The minister says, ‘There is no one of any description in this parish, or indeed in this county, supported wholly from the public fund; a little help is all that is given; for the rest, they must depend upon their own industry, the kindness of relations, or the liberality of the generous: entire support is unknown.’ In Criech, the population is 1969; the fund, 10*l.* 19*s.* ‘None supported wholly from the poor’s-fund; the pittance they receive from the fund would not support them one month in the year, but they are supported by their friends and neighbours. In admitting a pauper on the poor’s-roll, his moral character is minutely examined and considered in bestowing charity.’ In Tongue, the population is 1493; the fund, 12*l.* 12*s.* ‘None are wholly supported from the poor’s-fund in this parish, owing to the extreme smallness of our fund; on the poor’s-roll the number at present is forty, to whom are given from 3*s.* to 5*s.* or 6*s.* from the poor’s-fund in a year, according to the urgency of their claims, and chiefly

month. In twelve of the twenty-five districts not a single fresh case for relief had occurred during that time. In all together the new cases were twenty, eight of which would have belonged to

to buy shoes, or assist to buy them. The great majority of the above do a little for their own maintenance, but are principally supported by the kindness of their relations, and the bounty of charitable neighbours often sent to their relief.' In Kilarnan, the population is 1390; the fund, 46*l.* 10*s.* 'None on the poor's-roll of my parish are supported wholly from the poor's-fund, but live partly by their own industry, and when unable to work, are aided by their friends. There is one blind person in this parish; there are four persons deaf and dumb;—the above objects are aided a little by the kirk-session, but supported chiefly by their own relatives.' In Avoch, the population is 1560; and the fund, 25*l.* 10*s.* 6*d.* 'There are two persons blind, three deaf and dumb; the above objects are aided partly by the kirk-session, but supported chiefly by their own relatives.' In Nigg, the population is 1349; the fund, 16*l.* 'The highest rate of relief granted is too small for the support of any individual; private charity commonly makes up the deficiency.' In Fearn, the population is 1508; and the fund, 19*l.* 7*s.* 5*d.* 'They receive from 3*s.* to 7*s.* annually; the rate of allowance in Highland parishes is very frequently as small.' In Kincardine, the population is 1666; the fund is 9*l.* 10*s.* 'Character is always considered, and the amount of the allowance fixed in proportion; and this is seriously impressed on the mind of a bad man.' In Tarbat, the population is 1379; the fund is 33*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.*

the town-hospital cases under the old system (*Replies of Deacons*, pp. 240-261, p. 268). Their whole annual expense was 66*l.* (p. 233).

One deacon reports, that with a population of 240, "there are no paupers on the deacon's fund." The applications have been altogether six annually; in the last two years, three annually. The whole cost in three years and nine months has been 16*l.*, about 13*l.* of which was

'Ten of this number cannot earn any thing, but are assisted by their children and friends.' In Urray, the population is 2649; the fund, 16*l.* 8*s.* 'Five blind, three deaf and dumb, supported partly from the session-fund, chiefly by relations and a benevolent public.' In Kilmoreck, the population is 2528; the fund, 12*l.* 12*s.* 'There are on the poor's-roll of this parish, that can earn nothing for their maintenance, eight men and six women, and these are maintained by their charitable neighbours and the poor's-fund; the highest sum given is 10*s.* a year.' In Alness, the population is 1038; the fund, 29*l.* 8*s.* 'The people are uniformly sober and careful, and accumulate what they can lay by for future necessities.' Dingwall, the population is 1500; the fund, 902*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.* 'There is no pauper on the roll who is entirely supported by the session. They either do a little for their own subsistence, or are in a great measure supported by individual charity.' I think these instances form a very fair representation of the general state of unassessed parishes."—*CHALMERS'S Works*, vol. xvi. pp. 296, 297, 298.

expended in the first two years, chiefly on persons having no legal claim. The amount paid to persons who had a legal claim was about 6*l.* 10*s.* The reports of the other deacons are very similar.

The disposition to apply for or receive relief was greatly diminished (pp. 255, 256); the kindness of feeling towards the visitor and distributor was increased (p. 256); and the deacons were fully convinced, by their experience, of the practicability and advantage of extending the system.

The deacons' reports shew, that "although the people are poor, and the deacon is at hand, yet that his vicinity does not expose him to any weight or overwhelming urgency of applications." "For the right management of pauperism, it is not at all necessary to flee the applications, but resolutely, and we may add withal, kindly and humanely, to canvass them" (p. 249).

The conclusion in Dr. Chalmers's own mind, as the result of all his observation upon the experiment, is, that "all is now simple, and direct, and unincumbered as a country-parish; yet great as the relief is from the parochial and independent character of our present management, by which we stand disembarassed of all the more general corporations in the place, the most

precious effect of the whole management is, that we have thereby been landed in a far more easy and better-satisfied population.

“ The truth is, that they, and not we, have the merit of resolving this problem. All that is done by the administrators is, to meet civilly yet intelligently every application; and in the treatment of it, to give, on the one hand, every possible countenance to the industry of the people themselves, and the kindness of their relatives or neighbours; and, on the other hand, every possible discountenance to idleness or immorality, or the hardheartedness of kinsfolk. And in this way each individual application may be more troublesome than under the old system; but then the number of applications is greatly fewer than they were during the currency of its lax and careless administration. There is a forthputting of a greater strenuousness than before on the cases that do come forward; but the preventive influence of this on the many cases that are in consequence withheld, forms at once the compensation and the reward for this strenuousness. It all resolves itself into the efficacy which lies in a natural treatment of the people, who, when emancipated from the delusions of public charity, betake themselves



to their own expedients ; and find in the shifts, and the sympathies, and the numberless resources that do cast up throughout every assemblage of human beings, more than an equivalent for all which has been withdrawn from them" (p. 188).

" Still, it may appear a mystery to the reader, why a parish should be in a better condition with a moderate than with an ample public expenditure for the relief of indigence ; and it may help to bring it down more plainly and familiarly to his conceptions, to come forward with a few historical instances, taken at random, from the management of our own parochial concerns," illustrating the exuberance of mutual kindness and charity among the poor when public resources are withdrawn from them.

" The first case which occurs to us is that of a weaver, who, though he had sixpence a day as a pension, was certainly put into circumstances of difficulty, when, in a season of great depression, the typhus fever made its deadly inroads upon his household. His distress was in the highest degree striking and noticeable ; and it may therefore look strange that no sessional movement was made towards the relief of so afflicted a family. Our confidence was in the sympathies and kind offices of the immediate neighbour-



hood ; and we felt quite assured that any interference of ours might have checked or superseded these to such a degree as would have intercepted more of aid than is ever granted by the most liberal and wealthy of all our public institutions. An outcry, however, was raised against us ; and we felt compelled, for our own vindication, to investigate as far as we could the amount of supplies that had been rendered, and actually found that it exceeded, at least ten times, the whole sum that would have been allowed, in the given circumstances, out of the fund raised by assessment. . . . And it is just so that the power of individual benevolence is greatly underrated. Each is aware how incommensurate his own offering is to the necessity in question, and would therefore desiderate or demand a public administration of relief, else it is feared that nothing adequate can be done. He never thinks of that arithmetic by which it can be computed, that all the private offerings of himself and others far outweigh that relief, which, had it issued from the exchequer of a session or an almshouse, would have arrested those numerous rills of beneficence that are sure to flow in, upon every case of visible destitution or distress, from the surrounding vicinity. .

“ Our next case is that of an aged person, who, disabled from his ordinary work, made repeated applications for parochial relief, which was as repeatedly evaded, on the knowledge that he had competent and respectable kinsfolk, of whom we felt assured that they only needed a fair and candid representation of the matter ; and we have no doubt that they did acquit themselves rightly of all their natural obligations. Was it wrong, we ask, to devolve the application on this quarter ? and we appeal to the surviving relatives, now that the applicant is in his grave, whether they do not look back with a truer satisfaction than they would otherwise have felt, that a father and an uncle has been borne onward to the termination of his earthly career, in a style of independence which does honour to all the members of his family ?

“ The next matter that is suggested to our remembrance is that of an accidental visit to an old woman, and of the information she gave relative to the kindness of her next-door neighbour, in whose presence she told that she had received a dinner from her for every day during the preceding month.

“ A mother and daughter, the sole occupiers of a single apartment, were both afflicted with

cancer, for which the one had to undergo an operation, while the other was so far gone as to be irrecoverable. A case so impressive as this required only to be known, that it might be met and provided for; and on the first warning of its necessity, a subscription could easily be raised, out of the unforced liberalities of those who have been attracted from a distance, by the mere report of the circumstance having made its natural progress to their ears.

“ We have given a few cases, taken from the short history of the sessional administration of St. John’s parish. A very fine example of the natural sufficiency that there is among the people, under even the most trying of domestic reverses, took place a few years anterior to our connexion with St. John’s. A family of six lost both parents by death. There were three children unable to provide for themselves, and the other three were earning wages. On an impression that they were not able to maintain themselves, application was made by them to their elder for the admittance of the three youngest into the town-hospital; where, at the average of in-door pensioners, their maintenance would have cost at least 20*l.* a year. He remonstrated with them on the evil of thus breaking up the family,—on

the duty of the older to see after the education and subsistence of the younger branches,—and on the disgrace it would bring to them by consigning their younger brothers and sisters to pauperism. He assured them that they would find comparatively little difference in the sum which it required to maintain them when they all remained together; and offered them a small quarterly allowance, so long as they should feel it necessary, would they try the experiment of keeping together, and helping on each other to the best of their ability. They gave way to this right moral suasion; and application for the stipulated quarterly sum was only made twice. Thus, by a trifling expenditure, a sum at least fiftyfold was saved to the town-hospital.” (Pp. 189-191.)

Again; Dr. Chalmers says, in his evidence before the committee of the House of Commons: “ I never, during my experience in Glasgow, knew a single instance of distress which was not followed up by the most timely forthgoings of aid and of sympathy from the neighbours; I could state a number of instances to that effect. I remember going into one of the deepest and most wretched recesses in all Glasgow, where a very appalling case of distress met my observa-

tion ; that of a widow, whose two grown-up children had died within a day or two of each other. I remember distinctly seeing both their corpses on the same table ; it was in my own parish. I was quite sure that such a case could not escape the observation of neighbours. I always liked to see what amount of kindness came spontaneously forth upon such occasions ; and I was very much gratified to learn, a few days after, that the immediate neighbours occupying that little alley or court laid together their little contributions, and got her completely over her Martinmas difficulties. I never found it otherwise ; though I have often distinctly observed, that wherever there was ostensible relief obtruded upon the eyes of the population, they did feel themselves discharged from a responsibility for each other's wants, and released from the duty of being one another's keepers. In this particular case, a lady, an agent of the Female Society of Glasgow, went up stairs to relieve this widow, and gave all that the society empowered her to give, which was five shillings. The people, observing this movement, felt that the poor woman was in sufficient hands, and that they were now discharged from all further responsibility. So that the opening of this osten-

sible source of relief closed up far more effectual sources, that I am sure would never have failed her." (P. 322.)<sup>p</sup>

Dr. Chalmers quitted St. John's in 1823; and his first successor, Mr. M'Farlane, writes to him, in 1825, that "The experiment has succeeded in all points. I will not say beyond Dr. Chalmers's, but certainly beyond my most sanguine expectations. I do not despair of seeing the plan universally adopted in Glasgow." Then, in a letter of August 1826, he says, "I am consoled by reflecting that the experience of the deacons during a long vacancy, and Mr. Brown's (the present minister of St. John's) experience since his induction, unite with my own

<sup>p</sup> I must protest, at the same time, against the conclusion that might be drawn from this case, that public charities, and especially that the bounties of the rich, are in their nature injurious, and that these ought to be discontinued, lest they should stop the more abundant sources of mutual charity among the poor. It is clearly the duty of the rich to be jealous lest the poor should monopolise all the charity to themselves;—to seek out the proper objects of their bounty, and intrude it upon them, although, through the mutual charities of the poor, not absolutely required;—to relieve them with a secrecy, which shall not dispel and fright away other bounties by its ostentation; and a liberality, which shall fill up the measure of expectation created.



in proving the excellence of the St. John's system, and that there is nothing to hinder it from being permanent but the lukewarmness of the agency. At present they are as full of zeal in the cause as they were under Dr. Chalmers." (Pp. 341, 2.)

Mr. M'Farlane writes again to the same effect in 1830; and states, that he has instituted the same experiment in St. Enoch's parish. (P. 344.)

But the testimony which will obtain for it the greatest consideration is that of Mr. Tufnell, the assistant Poor-Law commissioner for England, who visited Glasgow at the end of 1833, when the system had been fourteen years in operation. He reports of the experiment instituted in St. John's:—

"This system has been attended with the most triumphant success for thirteen years. It is now in perfect operation; and not a doubt is expressed by its managers of its continuing to remain so. The poor which St. John's had in the hospital have diminished by deaths to four; and even the expense of maintaining these is paid for by the parish out of its collections; consequently it has to undergo the hardship of being assessed for the support of the poor, without receiving a farthing's benefit from the money



so raised, as not a single pauper belonging to it is maintained by the assessment.

“ St. John's is the second in point of population, and the poorest parish in Glasgow ; yet it actually has fewer paupers than any other parish.

“ This” (the largeness of the collections), “ I have little doubt, is owing to the knowledge which the Church-goers have, that the sole dependence of the poor is on the collections. This is the case so uniformly in every parish I have visited, that it might be known whether the poor of any place in Scotland were supported by assessment, simply by an inspection of the amount of offerings at the church-door.

“ The essence of the St. John's management consists in the superior system of inspection which it establishes. This is brought about by causing the applicants for aid to address themselves, in the first instance, to persons of station and character, whose sole parochial duty consists in examining into their condition, and who are always ready personally to pay a kind attention to their complaints.

“ This personal attention of the rich to the poor seems to be one of the most efficient modes of preventing pauperism. It is a subject of perpetual complaint, that the poor do not receive

the charities of the rich with gratitude. The reason of this appears to be, that the donation of a few shillings from a rich man to a poor one is no subtraction from the giver's comforts, and consequently is no proof of his interest in the other's welfare. It seems natural and reasonable that there should be some proportion preserved between the gratitude felt for a favour conferred, and the difficulty or inconvenience that the donor of it is put to in conferring it. If the rich give their time to the poor instead of" (? as well as) "their money, they part with a commodity which the poor see is valuable to the giver, and consequently esteem the attention the more, as it implies an interest in their prosperity; and a feeling seems to be engendered in their minds of unwillingness to press on the kindness of those who thus prove themselves ready to sympathise with them in distress, and to do their utmost to relieve it. This feeling acts as a spur to the exertions of the poor; their efforts to depend on their own resources are greater, and consequently the chance of their becoming dependent on the bounty of others less.

"In St. John's parish this personal attendance on the poor is carried to the greatest possible extent; every application for assistance is

sure to be met with patient attention, as far removed as possible from magisterial haughtiness; and instead of the continual bickerings between the overseer and the objects of relief, which frequently characterise the administration of an English parish, a friendly intercourse between the rich and poor insures to the latter a ready relief and a just appreciation of their distresses; to the former, that their bounty will not be abused, or their attentions be undervalued or unacknowledged.”<sup>q</sup>

Nevertheless this so triumphant experiment, after all this good success, and these testimonies, proofs, and eulogies, after an experience of eighteen years, has at length, in 1837, four years after Mr. Tufnell’s report, come suddenly to a conclusion. In like manner similar experiments, instituted in other parishes in Glasgow—in the outer-kirk parish, shortly after the example of St. John’s (without deacons); in the Canongate, the expenditure of which, with a population of 10,000, had been 900*l.* per annum, in 1822; in St. Enoch’s, in 1825,—have also failed and come to an end (vol. xv. p. 82, 83; vol. iii. p. 282, 193, 346). Of the southern suburb also, called the Gorbals, with a population of more than

<sup>q</sup> Chalmers’s Works, vol. xvi. pp. 437-443.

20,000, which had never been subject to an assessment, the regular annual expenditure of which was a gratuitous sum of 350*l.*,—a great part was assessed for the first time in 1824, and the remainder in 1827.

The effect of the assessment in this last parish has been, that already in 1833 the assessment amounted to 1,900*l.*; and the whole amount of the poor's funds, arising from this source, together with the collections, proclamations, and funeral donations, to 2,180*l.* The population had increased, since 1818, from more than 20,000 to 40,000. (Pp. 443, 444.)

What is likely to have been the cause of failure and disappointment in this so promising and so long flourishing system?

Dr. Chalmers and Mr. Buchanan have attributed it, 1st, To the continuance of the assessment upon the parish, while they derived no benefit whatever from the fund raised by it; 2d, To the want of a law of residence, which would have relieved them from the immigration of the poor of other parishes; 3d, To the diversion of the collection at St. Thomas's chapel, to which nearly half the parish was assigned as a district, to the purpose of providing for the ecclesiastical expenses; 4th, To a degree of

laxity in the management by some few of the deacons.<sup>r</sup>

Another cause might have been added,—that the congregation at St. John's Church being in great part composed of persons not resident in the parish, they could not have the same disposition to increase their contributions, or feel the poor of St. John's to be a personal responsibility resting upon them, as if they had been themselves parishioners; and so the experiment was wanting in one of the essential ingredients in a really local and parochial administration.

Alison, in his work on population, gives a different explanation of it. He attributes the whole success to the genius and eloquence of Dr. Chalmers. He says that, "that distinguished individual succeeded in his own parish, in Glasgow, by attracting the religious and enthusiastic from every part of that opulent city. What he gained was lost in other quarters, where it was not less needed; in his own parish parochial assessment was not required, but it was only by rendering it the more necessary in those that surrounded it."<sup>s</sup>

<sup>r</sup> Reflections of 1839 on the protracted Experience of Pauperism in Glasgow, vol. xvi. pp. 422-437.

<sup>s</sup> Alison on Population, vol. ii. p. 86.

He goes on to say, that “all projects of relieving the miseries of the labouring classes in great cities, by voluntary contributions collected at church-doors, are equally visionary and hopeless.

“It is a mistake to suppose, that the eloquence of a popular preacher or benevolent philanthropist always *creates* the charity which is collected at his orations. He often rather *collects it* from other quarters, and exhibits in one united stream what would otherwise have flowed unnoticed in a thousand rills. Under the impulse of the moment, indeed, larger sums may often be obtained from congregations affected by such thrilling efforts, than they would be disposed to give at ordinary times; but the reaction is frequently as powerful as the impulse, and what is gained to the cause of humanity in a moment of enthusiasm, is lost in the periods of calculation that succeed it.”<sup>t</sup>

These remarks are almost ridiculously inapplicable to the case of St. John's, where the whole annual collection never exceeded 482*l.*, and rose to that sum by a gradual increase from 400*l.* during the incumbencies of Drs. M'Farlane and Brown, Dr. Chalmers's successors; and this

<sup>t</sup> Alison on Population, vol. ii. pp. 86-90.



in a population of ten to twelve thousand, in the midst of a city of immense and growing opulence.

Mr. Alison proceeds to prove the inadequacy of all voluntary efforts to provide for the wants of the poor in towns, by exhibiting the immense increase of opulence, unprecedented in European annals, and what he calls the unparalleled generosity for the relief of the poor, in that city.

He says that the population since 1801 has increased from 84,000 to 290,000; and that the increase of wealth is in a much greater proportion. He then sums up the munificent contributions of the merchant inhabitants to various objects—including church-extension, refuges for criminals and females, school, infirmary, Wellington testimonial, and an extraordinary relief in 1837,—amounting to 114,800*l.* in seven years—of which 42,000*l.* was for church-extension—that is, 16,400*l.* a year. He adds, that 20,000*l.* a year are levied by assessment, and that there are innumerable private charities and much individual beneficence.

All this he uses to shew the utter impossibility of providing for the poor by voluntary efforts; these munificent contributions (!) having failed to provide against the increasing miseries and sufferings of the lowest classes.



Now it is very easy to make people open their eyes by presenting them with large figures; but it ought no more justly to produce a magnified impression than ought the statement of the French revenue, because they happen to calculate by francs, or that of the Chinese, because they reckon by taels. The proportion of the contributions to the private wealth is every thing. What proportion can this voluntary 16,000*l.*, with the compulsory 20,000*l.* added to it, bear to the immense wealth and incomes of this 300,000 population? It is not half-a-crown a year per head—not twelve shillings a year per family—for all subjects, including 6000*l.* a year for church-building. Certainly it is not by the large amount of the subscriptions that the impossibility of providing for the poor has been demonstrated; and the natural and obvious mode has never yet been tried, namely, of contributing fairly and liberally a sufficient proportion of our incomes.

It is very plain that if the church-offerings of St. John's had kept pace with the riches and population, that the plan at least might have succeeded somewhat longer. But the fact is, that the state of Glasgow is much altered with the increase of its riches. Society is demoralised, disunited, and

disorganised. Though a paltry sum of 400*l.* might be sufficient in a fresher and more wholesome state of things, yet a contribution of 480*l.* has been proved to be inadequate in an altered state of circumstances. This does not prove that the first sum was proper, but that the second was insufficient when occasions arose to try it. This does not prove that Christian measure and rule is not due in the most easy times, and adequate in the most difficult circumstances; but that great commercial prosperity increases poverty—that increase of riches is utterly demoralising, and excludes the exercise and influence of Christian charity.

The fault of the St. John's system was, that it was too economical and mercenary; it was too much tested and examined upon the principle of saving. It proved to be the most economical system, as is shewn by every comparison of it with other parishes. But it ought not on that account to be pursued for its economy, any more than worldly wealth should be the motive to Christian obedience, though Christianity does ensure prosperity according to its promise. The end of such an interested and selfish motive is, that it defeats itself, and blinds the mind to its

own interests, so that it chooses that which frustrates its own objects. So it has been in this case. If the parishioners had increased their contributions just a little, according to the necessities of the poor, they would have been able to continue and reap the fruits of this economical system. But failing in this Christian obligation, through too anxious an economy, they have chosen for themselves a return to a system uneconomical, ruinous, and self-destructive.

St. John's had certainly great discouragements and obstacles to contend with, in a poor population, a foreign congregation, and the general assessment. But all these obstacles would have been light and trifling under a Christian principle of almsgiving. All Christian obligation has its trials and temptations; and what is it without them? If we act faithfully, these will quickly vanish, and be dispelled before a resolution to act up to it; as in this instance, the rich foreign congregation of St. John's seems to have been a providential provision, if rightly used and accepted, to supply the peculiar disadvantages of an unusually poor population.

There is nothing, either in the Christian or parochial rule of almsgiving, to prevent contri-

butions and offerings being made from richer to poorer parishes and neighbourhoods, and that constantly.

As it now stands proved, both systems are impracticable. The compulsory system is ruinous to rich and poor; the voluntary economical system people will not practise:—worldliness must go the whole length, and become utterly worldly and mercenary,—and inflict the torments of wealth and worldliness upon itself.

It remains that Christian rule and motive should be experimented upon again. But of this there is little or no hope, in the midst of increased and increasing worldliness, selfishness, and anti-Christianity. What can be hoped for the exhibition and adoption of Christian rule and motive, coupled with confidence and faith, when the general estimate of religion is, that it is likely to lead us astray; when the very notion or conception of acting upon simple Christian rule in any thing, in these advanced and highly civilised and artificial times, is held a sufficient sign of folly and fanaticism; and the array of obstructions, and difficulties, and temptations, and entanglements against it, are daily increasing? Truly there is no hope in human power or reason.

Mr. Alison says, that the voluntary system of almsgiving must fail : and he is right according to his idea of it ; for he has never seen it carried on upon Christian principles. Mr. Alison says, that a resort to legal assessments is necessary : and he is right ; for people, such as they now are, will never give enough except by compulsion,—and he might have said, nor with it. Mr. Alison says, that it is the effect of great towns thoroughly to demoralise : and I should have thought this to be so, had I not seen that populous towns might of old have their sufficient complement of churches, as in old London and other very ancient cities. But Mr. Alison's remedies must perish with the rest of the systems which he condemns. His plan is—that which is current, in one shape or other, in all quarters now—to civilise first, and then to Christianise. He admits religion and the Gospel to be the only real regenerator of society *ultimately* ; but then he puts it in the second place. He sees all the evil effects of the present process of civilisation in its practice ; and yet he would “ prepare the soil for Christianity ” by means of it—by “ the growth of artificial ” wants—“ by enlisting the active propensities on the side of virtue ”—“ by the pursuit of the objects of civilised life ”

—“ by a principle of a still more valuable kind, the love of amassing from the pleasure itself of possessing property,—by far the most important principle which can actuate the lower orders.”

This is all the world still : money, mammon, the golden calf and image ; and as such it must perish also with its worshippers. Men do not yet see that religion is the greatest civiliser. Men *cannot* try the experiment of religious rule again, even though they see and know its truth and infallibility ;—men who see and know that the only hope is in deposing mammon, and bringing back the reign of Christianity, yet sigh, and retire, and shrink back, and despair of it ; and will not put their own shoulder to the wheel, or set the example of the experiment. The wounds of society can never be healed, the dislocations of the social system cannot be reduced, till religion reigns again, and moves the machine, and animates its operations. Till this prevail again, no movement of mankind can succeed ; whether as regards the administration of the poor, the conduct of the rich, the union and cement of classes, or any other department. But religion, which has long been wanting in the system, is at length deposed from the government. Each town, as much as every part of the country,



ought to be restored to that sufficiency of churches which may be seen in old London, as a beginning and preparation. The government see it, and know it; but they dare not, neither are they willing, to stir themselves, and to lend their assistance towards it. They are blinded, like other men of worldly wisdom, to their own true power and interests. Till the government shall come down with a proposition for a grant of twenty millions towards the increase of the Establishment,—to be paid down, and not borrowed,—as a first instalment,—there is no human hope or prospect for the country. If the prime minister had the wisdom and courage to make this demand, he would obtain it; he would increase his own power and respect immensely; he would be hailed as the saviour and deliverer of his country,—and perhaps he would save it.

THE END.



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